Commentary

VOLUME EIGHTY-FOUR • NUMBER ONE • JULY 1987

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Daniel Pipes

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Books in Review
Eliot A. Cohen / Joshua Muravchik / Richard T. Marin / David Pryce-Jones / Jeffrey Hart / David Gress

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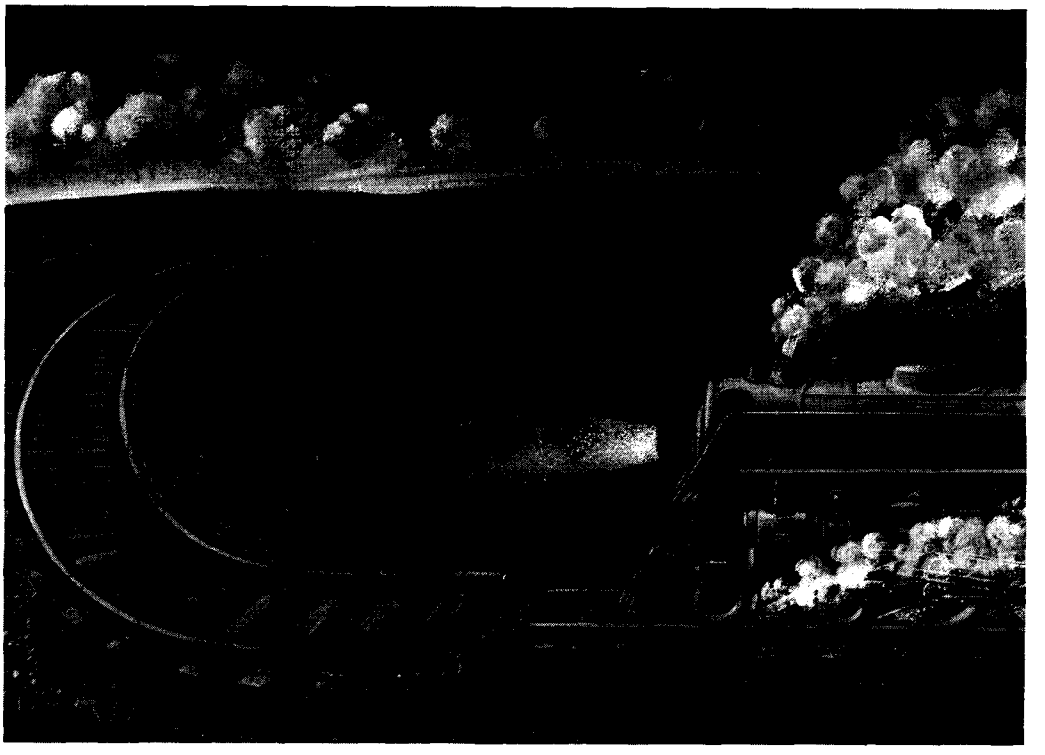
Issues of the Information Age:

The way beyond Babel.



Imagine trying to build a railroad system if every locomotive manufacturer used a different track gauge. Every local stretch of railroad had its own code of signals. And in order to ride a train, you needed to know the gauges and the signals and the switching procedures and the route and the conductor's odd pronunciation of the station names.

The business of moving and managing information is in a similar state today. Machines can't always talk to each other. Proprietary systems and networks abound, with suppliers often jockeying to make theirs the de facto standard. The enormous potential of the Information Age is being dissipated by incompatibility.

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Letters from Readers

The Dellums Record

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

During the course of their hubristic political hegira from revolution to reaction, Peter Collier and David Horowitz, two self-proclaimed former New Left activists turned righteous writers, seem to have lost their way on the zealots' road to Damascus. In their search for a new political lodestar they reinvent recent history seemingly to please their new patrons, suit their new suitors, and abuse their new adversaries.

We sadly note that their latest frenzied foray, "Another 'Low Dishonest Decade' on the Left" [January], contains much error and fantasy, telling us more about its authors than its targets.

Strikingly reminiscent of didactic and simplistic argumentation practiced more often in confrontation than serious discussion, their prose stands as a memorial to their apparently sympathetic, but intellectually fatuous, observation that in the 60's the "Left took its case to the streets, where its commitments could at least be examined. . . ." It strikes us as a curious intellectual pose that they, who now embrace the "system" with the fervor of the religiously converted, would challenge the Left for its attempts to have an impact on the political process through public organizing, editorializing, and marshaling facts to support a political position. Would that Messrs. Collier and Horowitz had paid as much attention to the marshaling of facts to support their new *Weltanschauung*.

Obviously, they should have known or discovered in the course of the research that should attend such an article that periodicals such as *Soldier of Fortune*, *Human Events*, and the *Washington Inquirer* had previously printed many of these same specious charges. These same misstatements and distortions of fact were disproven then, but this has not prevented their periodic reappearance under new bylines and, now, in the pages of COMMENTARY. The resort to highly-charged innuendo and calumny may aid the cause of right-wing fund-raising, but it further subverts serious, informed political debates on the critical issues of our time.

Messrs. Collier and Horowitz have provided us with an exemplar of ideological invective masquerading as scholarship. We do not set out here to challenge the "intellectual" foundation of their dogma. We do intend, though, to set out the facts, especially as they relate to the extended assault upon Representative Ronald V. Dellums's personal and political integrity and, ultimately, upon his patriotism.

This letter does not represent an effort to convince the reader of a political viewpoint, either as to the nature of the international problems confronting the United States or their possible resolution. However, we would hope that the careful reader will be sufficiently distressed at the errors of fact Messrs. Collier and Horowitz have cited to support their theories of a new/continuing international Communist conspiracy dedicated to interests inimical to the United States, that he will reexamine the premises, evidence, and conclusions of their article.

In the order in which they appear, we would correct the following misstatements and/or distortions of fact:

1. Messrs. Collier and Horowitz assert that "members of the Communist party in Washington, D.C. introduced [Farid Handal, brother of Shafik Handal, the "Salvadoran guerrilla leader"] to Congressman Ron Dellums of California, who in turn arranged for him to meet with the congressional Black Caucus." They base their assertion on Handal's alleged "journal (which was later found by authorities in Salvador in a captured guerrilla safe house)." General Alexander Haig's State Department subsequently incorporated it in the so-called White Paper on El Salvador released in February 1981.

While many have raised questions about the authenticity of some of these documents, we have no way of validating even the authenticity of this so-called journal, or of Farid Handal's authorship of same. However, we can state without equivocation that Mr. Dellums has never met Farid Handal or Shafik Handal anywhere, at any time, or in any place. Further, at the time Farid Handal was on Capitol Hill, Mr. Dellums was in California, attending a

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series of events scheduled weeks and, in one instance, months before Handal's appearance.

We would willingly debate U.S. policy vis-à-vis Central America at another time; Mr. Dellums makes no apologies for his repeated efforts since 1979 to end the death and destruction throughout Central America and to achieve a negotiated settlement among the contending factions there. However, that debate remains for another day.

2. Messrs. Collier and Horowitz make a series of statements about individuals challenging the U.S.-sponsored "air war" in El Salvador, in an effort to denigrate the validity of the charges and the integrity of the people who reported them.

In reality, this and other *ad-hominem* attacks do not detract from the accuracy of many of these reports. Members of Mr. Dellums's staff, various Catholic Church groups, and numerous reporters from the international community all have on-the-spot pictures and personal interviews with survivors dating back to 1981. They detail repeated bombing and strafing runs and other military action against civilians attempting to flee combat zones throughout and beyond the borders of El Salvador.

3. Messrs. Collier and Horowitz claim that Mr. Dellums "now speaks in the name of 'peace' and 'democratic values,' which in practice always seem to dictate attacking the United States and apologizing for the USSR and other enemies of this country."

This charge reads like a variation on a theme by Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, enunciated at the Dallas Republican convention of 1984, when she "went ballistic" against the alleged "Blame America First" philosophy of the "San Francisco Democrats." Evidently Messrs. Collier and Horowitz have not read the prologue to Mr. Dellums's book, *Defense Sense: The Search for a Rational Military Policy* (Ballinger, 1983, 1984), which contains a much more balanced analysis of the evolution of the cold war than does, for example, Mr. Horowitz's *The Free World Colossus* (1965). Nor do they seem aware of Mr. Dellums's speech to the Socialist International conference in Washington on December 5, 1980, in which he spoke out strongly against human-rights abuses on both the Left and the Right.

If the search for accuracy and balanced reporting truly interested Messrs. Collier and Horowitz, they might also have asked to read Mr. Dellums's congressional newsletters or press-release file. To give one example, in his December 1985 newsletter, Mr. Dellums wrote:

> No doubt exists that the Soviets and their allies have systematically violated many of the human-rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords. However, many allegations of human-rights abuses also can be leveled against the U.S. and its allies. Obviously self-serving, false statements such as Mr. Gorbachev's assertion that there is "no Jewish problem" in the USSR are no less mind-boggling than the Vice President's June 1981 toast to the Marcos regime in the Philippines: "We love your adherence to democratic principles and democratic processes." We must pursue an honest, non-expedient discussion of the human-rights agenda if we are ever to succeed on these issues.

4. They also assert: "Thus he travels abroad as an ornament for functions of the World Peace Council."

In reality, since the day he was sworn in as a Member of Congress in January 1971, Mr. Dellums has never traveled abroad to, or on behalf of, any function of the World Peace Council.

5. Messrs. Collier and Horowitz further assert that "when Carter sought to raise the military budget after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Dellums was alarmed by the specter of a resurgent American 'militarism' in response to an action taken by the Soviets 'to protect their borders.'"

For the record, Mr. Carter sought this military budget increase *prior to* the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Carter administration used the invasion and the occupation of the U.S. embassy in neighboring Iran as *ex-post-facto* rationalizations to defend its preexisting budget formulation.

In a subsequent undated letter to a Dellums staff member who had inquired about the source of this quotation, they wrote:

> Ron made these remarks in one of the protest meetings against the proposal to hold an alternate Olympics in Berkeley after Carter announced

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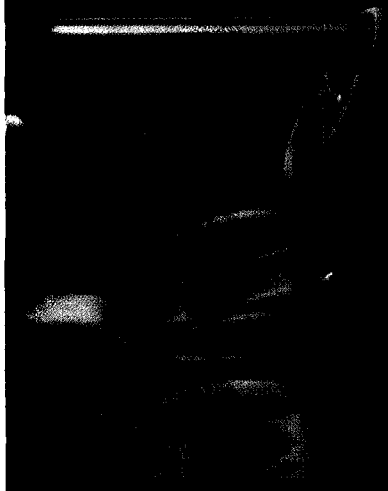

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the U.S. boycott. . . . From our current political perspective we can understand why you might find the statement in question embarrassing, but it is absurd to allege, as you apparently did in your conversation with the office of Norman Podhoretz, that Ron didn't say it.

Unfortunately for Messrs. Collier and Horowitz, the facts disprove what they would believe. According to contemporaneous records, Mr. Dellums made only one public speech in 1980 in the Bay Area that one might characterize as a "protest meeting": *viz.*, a "Teach-In" on world events organized by radio station KPFA in Berkeley. After two months of searching, we finally received a tape of the speech, made in April 1980 at the Community Theater in Berkeley, and listened to it several times over.

In that speech Mr. Dellums made extensive comments about the increased militarization of U.S. cold-war foreign policy. But he never uttered the alleged quote cited above about an action taken by the Soviets "to protect their borders."

Mr. Dellums based this speech on his prior public statements condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan *and* his opposition to the Carter-imposed U.S. boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics. Had Messrs. Collier and Horowitz consulted such a primary-source document as the U.S. *Congressional Record*, they would have made some interesting discoveries. For example, on January 24, 1980, during debate on the House floor concerning President Carter's call for a U.S. boycott of the Olympics, Mr. Dellums spoke in opposition to the proposal, because he felt this would further politicize international athletics and punish innocent American athletes for Soviet misdeeds. He concluded his remarks by saying:

> Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would simply say to my colleagues that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was wrong, there is no question about it. But to leap to the conclusion [as President Carter stated] that this is the greatest threat to world peace and the security of the nation since World War II is an absurd, irresponsible overstatement and it is an incredibly demagogic reaction. [Vol. 126, Part 1, p. 576]

Two weeks later, on February 6, 1980, Mr. Dellums made a public press-conference statement criticizing the increased Carter military budget. He then entered the full text of that statement in the *Congressional Record*. Regarding the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan he said:

> What the Soviets have done in Afghanistan is morally wrong and politically stupid, both from a short-term and long-term perspective. One must ask why they choose to do so. Surely they must have known—and understood—that, in a [U.S.] presidential election year, it meant an inevitable swing to the Right in both political parties. The hardliners of both sides have now been reinforced in their prejudices that a SALT treaty is unfeasible, and that the only recourse left is a further escalation in military budgets and weapons escalation. [Vol. 126, Part 2, pp. 2236-2237]

Mr. Dellums also offered a similar analysis of the Soviets' "record of moral malfeasance" concerning their invasions of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan in his book, *Defense Sense* (pp. xxiv-xxv).

6. Messrs. Collier and Horowitz assert: "In a speech about this issue [Afghanistan?] [Dellums] said: 'This is the capitalist, monopoly capital structure at work, preparing now to draft eighteen-year-olds to go and fight to protect their oil while every one of them are taking in billions of dollars in profits. . . .'"

If they refer to Mr. Dellums's April 1980 speech in Berkeley, the radio tape contains no such statement or anything even remotely approximating it. According to the tape, Mr. Dellums actually said the following concerning the oil issue:

> And, finally, these questions must be asked. Is oil the bottom line in this incredibly insane scenario? Are we willing to go to the brink of nuclear war to preserve our excessive consumption of energy, rather than practice as well as preach energy conservation? Will the militarization of the Middle East bring stability to an area of the world that has seen four major wars between Arabs and Israelis in the past thirty-two years? These are hard questions to which there are no easy answers. . . . But of this I am certain. The solutions proposed by the Carter administration are ill-conceived, overreactive, and a definite danger to the peace of the entire world.

7. Messrs. Collier and Horowitz make a series of assertions and allegations concerning Mr. Dellums and Grenada. The following misstatements of fact and distortions of fact ought to be noted:

• They assert that "when he traveled among the Marxist-Leninists of Grenada a few years ago, he did so as an open admirer of their revolution."

In reality, Mr. Dellums has visited Grenada twice. In April 1982 the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee asked him to visit and to report back on the new airport under construction there. Subsequent to his return, Mr. Dellums submitted his report to the committee in June 1982. Not a word of that report was subsequently changed by any person at anyone's request.

Inter alia, this report included the information that six civilian airports already existed in the Caribbean Basin with longer runways than the one under construction in Grenada. Further, various NATO countries and Sweden provided the overwhelming and primary funding for the new Grenada airport, a development project likewise sought by prerevolutionary governments as well.

Ironically, in the aftermath of the invasion, the Reagan administration implemented many of Mr. Dellums's proposals for assistance to Grenada, including an intensified effort to finish the new airport for tourist use at an early date.

Following the Reagan administration's invasion of Grenada in October 1983, the Speaker of the House asked Mr. Dellums to visit Grenada as a member of the Speaker's investigation delegation and report back to him. Mr. Dellums's report to the Speaker criticized the Reagan administration's preference for covert and overt military action rather than diplomatic, negotiated solutions to fundamentally political, social, and economic problems.

• Messrs. Collier and Horowitz also allege that Mr. Dellums "has different criteria for Communist dictatorships."

Concerning Grenada, the following facts might also be noted. Despite his personal acquaintance with Maurice Bishop, Mr. Dellums, a man noted for his political integrity and candor on both sides of the aisle, had no difficulty in openly criticizing some of Bishop's policies during meetings with the

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Speaker of the House and with members of the House Armed Services Committee in June 1983, at which Bishop was present.

• With respect to Messrs. Collier and Horowitz's assertions regarding members of Mr. Dellums's staff: Carlottia Scott had a longstanding personal relationshp with Maurice Bishop, dating back to the early 1970's when he was a law student in the United Kingdom. Her statements in the letter quoted by the authors reflect her own personal attitudes on these matters.

The allegations concerning a former staff member, Barbara Lee, are somewhat misleading. Barbara Lee did visit Grenada in December 1982. She did have personal friends and acquaintances in the Grenadan government, and she did show them a copy of the Dellums report (an unclassified document) some six months *after* Mr. Dellums had submitted it to the House Armed Services Committee, and the committee had received it.

WE would hope that this effort to set the record straight will inspire a more scholarly and even-handed appraisal of political activism in the 80's and beyond. The planet remains too dangerous and unstable a place in which to have important decisions made on the basis of expedient analyses and misrepresentation of the facts.

Finally, in the 1980 Berkeley speech alluded to above, Mr. Dellums provided, ironically, a definition of what true patriotism requires in a society that would remain free:

> I think it is terribly important that we begin to make the statement that the process has to have some integrity. It would seem to me that when people stand up to challenge policies, it is very frightening when they are called unpatriotic. Because it is my belief that the true patriots of our society are those who have the strength and the courage to challenge policies when they perceive that they are wrong. As Americans we have a responsibility to do that.

In this year of the bicentennial of our Constitution we can only hope that, in the future, both COMMENTARY and these authors will recognize that various segments of our society can honorably hold divergent views on the critical issues of war and peace in the nuclear age; and that they should feel free to express them without fear of having their integrity and patriotism impugned with such reckless abandon.

Such discourse can only strengthen our nation; uncritical obeisance to cold-war orthodoxy, and *ad-hominem* attacks on those who would challenge that orthodoxy, can only hasten the end of this experiment in democracy and, in the current world context, perhaps the demise of us all.

H. LEE HALTERMAN and
R.H. (MAX) MILLER
[*H. Lee Halterman, Ronald V. Dellums's District Counsel, has worked for Mr. Dellums since his first election in 1970. R.H. Miller has worked in Mr. Dellums's Washington office since 1979*]
Washington, D.C.

PETER COLLIER and DAVID HOROWITZ write:

Adopting an air of injured innocence in behalf of Ronald V. Dellums, H. Lee Halterman and R.H. Miller imply that they are not merely defending the Congressman but attempting to restore integrity to political discourse itself, thereby strengthening the nation and ultimately (radicals were never modest) forestalling the end of the world. Presenting themselves as troubled communicants in the church of liberalism, Messrs. Halterman and Miller portray Mr. Dellums himself as a saint of democracy—brave critic of his country's faults, incorruptible defender of human rights on both sides of the cold-war divide, passionate champion of global peace.

They got one of these three assertions right. That Mr. Dellums is a critic of his own country, no one who has seen him in action can deny. In April 1980, at a time when Soviet armies were pouring across the border of Afghanistan with a savagery reminiscent of the Nazi invasions of World War II, Mr. Dellums was telling a thousand students at the University of California, Berkeley: "From my vantage point as your Representative, we are at an incredibly dangerous moment. Washington, D.C. is a very evil place. . . . While Mr. Zignu [*sic*] Brzezinski professes to see the arc of crises in Southwest Asia as the Balkan tinderbox of World War III, well Ron Dellums sees the only arc of crises being the one that runs between the basement of the west wing of the White House and the war room of the Pentagon."

School of American Ballet student performance: Merrill Ashley. Copyright:Martha Swope, 1967.

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In the same speech, Mr. Dellums gave this analysis of the crisis in Iran where the Ayatollah's fanatics had seized their American hostages: "That the hostages are still in Iran is due solely to the Carter administration's repeated refusals to deal with the revolutionary government in Iran as a legitimate expression of Iran's national will." If by Mr. Dellums's radical logic we had *made* the Ayatollah take the hostages, his solution to the crisis was for America to get down on its knees and apologize before the world for its sins:

> . . . What is wrong with us standing publicly in the international arena and saying, "Yes . . . we have fouled up the lives of many people in Iran, but as Americans we now have come to understand that there are millions of human beings in the world who do not love Americans because under the flag of the United States we have wreaked havoc on millions of people. But we are going to cleanse ourselves and right that wrong. . . ."

The occasion of this proposal was a demonstration which Messrs. Halterman and Miller coyly describe in their letter as a " 'Teach-In' on world events." In fact the organizers were much more specific than that, designing the teach-in as the climax of a week of protest against President Carter's call for a military draft in response to the Soviet aggression in Afghanistan. Its official designation was "The KPFA Stop the War Teach-In."

"Stop the War"—a slogan revived from the 1960's. And this was exactly the way the organizers of the event, Mr. Dellums, and other speakers such as Communist party leader Angela Davis saw the occasion. In the eyes of Mr. Dellums and the others present, Afghanistan needed to be seen in the context of Vietnam. To "stop the war," needless to say, did not refer to the Soviet war against the Afghan people, but rather to any U.S. response to that war. In the bizarre logic understood only by people like Mr. Dellums and Angela Davis, the U.S. was the aggressor merely because the Carter administration had begun to talk, however tentatively, of responding to Soviet aggression.

To Mr. Dellums, who has condemned America's defense budget as "insidious and insane" and who condemned the liberation of Grenada which was supported by some 92 percent of the people there as a "war crime," the Soviets' campaign of genocide against Afghanistan was merely an understandable Russian concern with secure borders. While the Soviets were beginning the slaughter that would eventually claim the lives of a million Afghans and make a quarter of the nation into refugees, Mr. Dellums advised Americans to "look at it from the Russians' point of view; they only want a stable neighbor" (Berkeley *Gazette*, February 10, 1980).

Mr. Dellums's aides now try to draw a smokescreen across these attitudes by quoting, first, a speech made in the House in which Mr. Dellums described the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as "wrong," but then immediately went on to characterize President Carter's reaction to it as "absurd," "irresponsible," and "demagogic."

They then quote another statement of his: "What the Soviets have done in Afghanistan is morally wrong and politically stupid." Now for a man who condemns his own government as "very evil," this is pretty weak stuff.

What Messrs. Halterman and Miller do not make clear, however, is that Mr. Dellums never actually uttered the words in this mild criticism of the Soviets, but rather entered them silently into the unread tomes of the *Congressional Record*. In fact, it is hard to believe that this paltry criticism really represents a personal view. Rather, it is part of a political formula hammered out by *all* the members of the congressional Black Caucus. The statement is buried in the ninth paragraph of a Caucus broadside *against* the post-invasion policies of the Carter White House. The Black Caucus position, which Mr. Dellums explained at a press conference, was not so much to express concern about Soviet military aggression as to criticize the White House for exaggerating its concern; not so much to condemn the militarism of the Soviet Union as to attack the Carter administration for calling the invasion a "serious threat to world peace."

This is the context in which Messrs. Halterman and Miller's denial that Mr. Dellums made the statement we attributed to him about Afghanistan must be seen. It hardly surprises us that they cite a letter we ourselves had written to Mr. Dellums's office, but remove by ellipses the only important information the letter conveyed. After our article appeared, when they claimed that Mr. Dellums had not made the statement on Afghanistan we attributed to him, we wrote them to point out that we knew at first hand that Mr. Dellums makes off-the-cuff remarks when he is back home in the People's Republic of Berkeley where it is still *de rigueur* to see America as evil. We also noted in this letter—in the passage Messrs. Halterman and Miller decided to elide—that the remarks made at an appearance in Berkeley were recorded at the time by a reporter on assignment from the New York *Times* who made his notes available to us.

To summarize: we were not present when Mr. Dellums made the statement at issue. We were given notes containing the statement by a reporter working on a story about Berkeley for the *Times* who was present, a fact Messrs. Halterman and Miller try to airbrush out of the record just as they try to airbrush away the fact that Mr. Dellums, with the exception of formulaic criticisms of the Soviets in Afghanistan, has seen the only danger of the invasion of Afghanistan to be the danger of a U.S. response. Knowing the members of the dishonest Left for who they are, we are not surprised by any of this.

MESSRS. HALTERMAN and MILLER make other charges of "misstatement of fact."

1. They deny that Mr. Dellums ever met face to face with Farid Handal, as the Communist agent's diary indicates. They allege that "many have raised questions about the authenticity" of the diary, which we cited to show how on one specific occasion Mr. Dellums worked hand in glove with the totalitarian guerrilla movements trying to subvert U.S. policy on Central America from within.

Not only is the U.S. State Department on record with a judgment that the Handal diary is authentic, there is in fact no serious question about the authenticity of the diary. So it is not our word against Mr. Dellums's, but Mr. Dellums's word against Farid Handal's. It is worth noting that in any case the Congressman's aides do not deny the most telling statement in the Handal diary in relation to Mr. Dellums—that he turned over his congressional offices to an agent of the Salvadoran guer-

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rillas who used it to create a support apparatus throughout the United States. ("Monday morning the offices of Congressman Dellums were turned into our offices. Everything was done from there.")

2. Messrs. Halterman and Miller accuse us of making *ad-hominem* attacks on people who "challenged the U.S.-sponsored 'air war' in El Salvador" during congressional hearings. Actually, the "witnesses" were not challenging this phenomenon but attempting to prove that it existed. If their dubious assertions had been accepted, the Duarte government would have been in violation of the "certification conditions" Congress had recently established for it to qualify for U.S. aid. Congress would then have cut off support for Duarte and a major blow would have been struck in behalf of the Salvadoran guerrillas.

In our article, we identified the "witnesses" of the "air war" as dedicated supporters of the guerrilla forces and diehard opponents of the Duarte government. Mr. Dellums's aides, whose sympathies also seem to lie with the Communist-dominated guerrillas in El Salvador, naturally disparage this view as an *ad-hominem* attack. Is it *ad hominem* to point out the biases that affect the credibility of witnesses during an adversarial proceeding?

3. In our article we asserted that Mr. Dellums's actions reveal a distinctive bias toward the Soviet camp in the cold-war struggle. As an illustration we referred to his involvement with the Soviet-financed and -controlled World Peace Council, a front created by Stalin himself.

While not disputing the general assertion, Messrs. Halterman and Miller deny the specific—that the Congressman traveled abroad for the World Peace Council. The travel is something we cannot prove. But in 1978, Mr. Dellums was one of the organizers of a meeting of the World Peace Council's Washington Bureau in the nation's capital. (This was the first time the World Peace Council had appeared on U.S. soil since 1949.) And given the fact that in 1986 Mr. Dellums was a member on the official International Preparatory Committee of the World Peace Council's World Congress in Copenhagen, it is easy to understand how we drew the inference of travel. Mr. Dellums did not actually attend this World Congress, but his top aide, Carlottia Scott, did. The proceedings were presided over by Mr. Dellums's political protégé, Berkeley Mayor Gus Newport, who is vice-chairman of the World Peace Council itself.

It is disingenuous, to say the least, for Messrs. Halterman and Miller to give the impression that Mr. Dellums maintains the same sort of decorous distance from the World Peace Council as he does, say, from the National Rifle Association.

4. As evidence of our "misstatements of fact and distortions of fact" on the Grenada issue, Messrs. Halterman and Miller refer to our observation that when Mr. Dellums traveled among the Marxist-Leninists of Grenada he did so "as an open admirer of their revolution" and reply that he only visited Grenada twice. They dodge the issue and then reapproach it gingerly by citing private meetings at which Mr. Dellums "had no difficulty in openly criticizing some of [Maurice] Bishop's policies." The policies are not named, and so the measure of the Congressman's criticism cannot be taken. Perhaps Mr. Dellums thought that Grenadan taxes were too high; perhaps he told Bishop that there ought to be more Cuban militiamen protecting the revolution from the United States.

The crucial facts regarding Mr. Dellums's disturbing actions in relation to the airport the Cubans were constructing for the Grenadan Politburo are neither refuted nor explained in Messrs. Halterman and Miller's letter. Having investigated the matter of the airport for the House Armed Services Committee, Mr. Dellums reported that it was intended solely for tourist traffic and that the Reagan administration's suspicions to the contrary were "absurd, patronizing, and totally unwarranted."

In their letter, Messrs. Halterman and Miller repeat Mr. Dellums's assurances, and even invoke the subsequent effort of the Reagan administration to complete the airport as confirmation that Mr. Dellums had been right all

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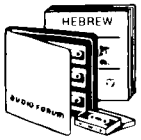

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along. The legerdemain is a little awkward here: what would serve military uses in a Marxist-Leninist regime could and should be turned to peaceful purposes by a democratic government such as the one now in place in Grenada thanks to the U.S. military.

Messrs. Halterman and Miller ignore evidence we cited in our article that shows Mr. Dellums was not only wrong about the airport but so egregiously wrong that his report amounted to disinformation. In the notebook of Grenadan Defense Minister Liam James, captured after the liberation, an entry dated March 22, 1980, clearly states: "The Revo[lution] has been able to crush counterrevolution internationally. *Airport will be used for Cuban and Soviet military*" (emphasis added). Was the Grenadan Defense Minister referring to Cuban and Soviet military tourists?

Also among the cache of documents retrieved after the liberation of Grenada are the minutes of a Politburo meeting where the following remarks by Maurice Bishop appear: "Barbara Lee [a Dellums aide] is here presently and has brought with her a report on the international airport that was done by Ron Dellums. They have requested that we look at the document and suggest any changes we deem necessary. They will be willing to make the changes." Mr. Dellums's aides do not deny that the offer was made to the head of the dictatorsip by an emissary of the Congressman. Nor do they offer any possible legitimate reason to explain why this happened. Why would Barbara Lee offer Maurice Bishop the opportunity to see and change a report six months after it had been completed?

Messrs. Halterman and Miller would have us believe that there is a vast chasm between the Congressman and his staff members, whom he apparently allows to go freelancing throughout the Marxist-Leninist world without constraint. This allows them not only to finesse the issue of Barbara Lee's behavior but also to avoid addressing the even more disturbing case of Mr. Dellums's chief aide, Carlottia Scott, whose love letters to Maurice Bishop were also among the documents captured in Grenada. We quoted one of these letters in our article. "Ron [Dellums] has become truly committed to Grenada . . . [and to] making [the Revolution] strong," Miss Scott wrote, adding that after Bishop himself, the only person "that [Dellums] expresses such admiration for is Fidel."

Messrs. Halterman and Miller offer no comment as to the propriety of the top aide of the chairman of a House committee overseeing U.S. military installations being romantically involved with the dictator of a country allied to the Soviet bloc. Nor do they suggest any purpose she might have had in making such statements to Bishop about Mr. Dellums's views. If the statements are untrue, why doesn't Mr. Dellums disclaim them? Why doesn't he fire Carlottia Scott the next time she takes time out from her travels to the guerrilla movement of Central America to touch base in Washington?

One aide, Barbara Lee, had "personal friends" in the Grenadan dictatorship; another, Carlottia Scott, was in love with the dictator himself. These women visited the Marxist junta; they passed information from Washington to Grenada. Whether the divided loyalties of the Dellums office led the Congressman or his staff members to step beyond the boundaries of legal behavior in the matter of Grenada—a question openly discussed by many of Mr. Dellums's colleagues in the House even if Messrs. Halterman and Miller ignore it—should be the matter for a formal inquiry that is long overdue.

"The Wise Men"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have just read with some dismay the article by H.J. Kaplan, "Requiem for the 'Establishment'" [April], in which he discusses *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made* by Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas. Perhaps because Mr. Kaplan was really writing a personal memoir, he overlooked the blatant revisionism of the book as regards the origins of the cold war.

I recently reviewed *The Wise Men* in *National Review*, and I read it right down to its confusing footnotes. My disagreement with Mr. Kaplan is not a normal disagreement between reviewers. I feel that it is a disservice to your readers to allow the impression to stand that *The Wise Men* is some mild political history when in fact its theme is "*pas d'ennemis à gauche*," better expressed, perhaps, by the phrase anti-anti-Communism.

The authors praise the Wise Men—Dean Acheson, Charles E. Bohlen, Averell Harriman, George F. Kennan, Robert A. Lovett, and John J. McCloy—for their public service, but they object to Acheson, Harriman, and Kennan for being too "ideological" in their view of the Soviet Union. In fact, a test of liberalism for the authors is avoiding any harsh judgments of the USSR.

Let me offer some examples. Isaacson and Thomas write that while seven out of ten Harvard students in the 1920's came from Republican homes, they "were hardly all reactionary." Proof? A survey of the class of 1926 showed that one-third were "strongly sympathetic" or "mildly sympathetic" to the Soviet Union. In other words, to be unsympathetic to the Soviet Union is to be "reactionary."

The authors accuse Acheson "and others [who] consciously overstated the [Soviet] threat they perceived in order to sell their vision of America's role in the postwar world." Later, they attack Acheson again, saying that "Acheson's liberalism was by now [1949] all but eclipsed by his distrust of the Soviets."

They describe Stalin as "paranoid and obdurate." Yet perhaps because he had successfully penetrated the intelligence and counterintelligence services of the U.S. and Britain, Stalin was not paranoid and obdurate at all but was acting like a man who knew what was going on in the White House and at 10 Downing Street.

Isaacson and Thomas pay almost no attention to the espionage revelations of Igor Gouzenko. They make a peculiar reference to Alger Hiss, who, they write, "was found guilty, and, history suggests, rightfully so." History, that jade, had nothing to do with Hiss's guilt; it was evidence and a jury which convicted Hiss, and rightly so. As for Soviet penetration of the U.S. government: "There had in fact been Communists in government in the 1930's—not enough to jeopardize national security, but just enough to lend credence to a Red scare." Peculiarly, the authors never mention the activities of the Rosenbergs, Klaus Fuchs, Harry Dexter White, and Lauchlin Currie as, perhaps, lending credence to something more than a "Red scare."

They find that the younger anti-Communist Averell Harriman had

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by 1970 "become aligned with the more liberal wing of the Democratic party and had mellowed in his view of the Soviets." To be a liberal, then, you must have a mellow view of the USSR. The authors blame Harriman in the postwar period for "the ominous decline in Soviet-American relations [because] he had done so much to create the current atmosphere."

Isaacson and Thomas conclude that "Truman's men consistently oversimplified and overstated the truth, and in so doing made anti-Communism dangerously rigid and U.S. commitments overly sweeping." They accuse the Wise Men ("though with less justification," they say) of bearing "part of the responsibility for creating a world divided between East and West, overarmed and perpetually hovering at the brink." The Wise Men oversold "their cause" and became "fixated by some of their own rhetoric."

I could go on with more samples of the modern anti-anti-Communism whose exemplars, Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, have learned how to apply the maquillage of "objectivity" while repeating the old clichés about who started the cold war.

ARNOLD BEICHMAN
Hoover Institution
Stanford, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Requiem for the 'Establishment,'" H.J. Kaplan notes that both George Kennan and Dean Acheson were "fiercely opposed . . . to any congressional encroachment on the President's preeminent right and duty to manage foreign affairs." It seems clear that both Kennan and Acheson viewed Congress as an unwieldy assemblage of lawyers and Yahoos who epitomized what, in *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950* (1951), Kennan called the "legalistic-moralistic approach to international problems." Such an approach, coupled with its unwieldiness, rendered Congress incapable of conducting foreign affairs.

The Kennan-Acheson view gradually prevailed. After the fall of Senator Joseph McCarthy, congressional intrusion slowly diminished and presidential prerogative reached its zenith during the Presidencies of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. The triumph was short-lived. The Wise Men, and especially what Mr. Kaplan calls "a handful of younger Wise Men," failed. The reasons for their failure were many and complex, but the domestic political result has been a restoration of congressional encroachment, and on a far greater scale than in the late 1940's and early 1950's. This time around it will be much more difficult to inhibit congressional intrusion than it was when Kennan and Acheson and President Truman fought the good fight in the early 1950's. . . .

Mr. Kaplan pays eloquent tribute to the achievements of the Wise Men in the late 1940's, but, in the 1950's, he notes many "signpost[s] . . . on the upper reaches of a slippery slope." Since the 1960's we have seen, as Mr. Kaplan puts it, "four Presidencies destroyed by foreign-policy failures in twenty years" as well as "a sort of constant partisan warfare at home, and confusion, dismay, and distrust of our purposes abroad." . . .

Mr. Kaplan believes that "the changes in our own society . . . may actually have been more profound" than the changes that have occurred among our adversaries. . . .

I submit that more than anything else what has made for Mr. Kaplan's "very different United States" is education. In "How to Cope with the Soviet Threat" [COMMENTARY, August 1984], Richard Pipes wrote that in West Germany those Germans who "have psychologically opted out of the alliance" (and, it must be added, outright sympathizers and supporters of Marxist regimes) are centered in an element which he described as "mass-educated . . . teachers, students, and functionaries—products of the ambitious higher-education programs of postwar Germany."

Mr. Pipes's insight prompts a further question. What have been the consequences of "the ambitious higher-education programs" in the postwar United States and the resultant American hordes of "mass-educated teachers, students, and functionaries"? . . .

From the early years of this century, the United States was the world's leading producer of almost everything, but in the wake of the 1960's it has become the world's leading producer of "teachers, students, and functionaries," and not much else. Most of our businessmen are now highly educated "managers." . . . Since the 1960's, the country has been deluged with hordes of pseudo-intellectual pseudo sophisticates—most disastrously among them swarms of aesthetes, "scholars," lawyers (Kennan's fear in 1951 of a "legalistic-moralistic approach" must now be multiplied several fold), "counselors," "helping professionals," and "investigative journalists." We are now long overdue for a hard look at the negative consequences of education and its role in the progress of American debilitation. . . .

It certainly seems clear now that greater damage was done in the late 1960's and early 70's than in the early 50's. The fragile postwar bipartisan consensus was shaken but survived the Korean War, what Mr. Kaplan calls "the insubordination of General MacArthur," and the antics of McCarthy and his Yahoos; it was shattered by Vietnam and the antics of the New Class.

Much has been written about the vulgar excesses and destructive consequences of the former period, while the vulgar excesses and destructive consequences of the latter era are still, twenty years later, being widely portrayed as heroic. This, I submit, is because McCarthyism was a blue-collar revolt which was defeated, while the 60's rebellion was a New Class revolt which has succeeded, and our history is now being written by all those "scholars" and "investigative journalists."

The prospects for a coherent foreign policy now seem dim indeed. It has been far more difficult to "contain" the numerous and powerful forces tending toward instability unleashed over the past two decades than it was to restrain the Yahoos in the 1950's. Of course, much of the recent predicament stems from the failure of the Wise Men in the 1960's. Where would we now be had the Wise Men who advised President Johnson not failed?

JAMES E. SALYERS
Ashmore, Illinois

H.J. KAPLAN writes:

I am dismayed to have dismayed my implacable old friend Arnold Beichman, who seems to have succumbed to the current French flu and read a book that isn't there, even to the "confusing footnotes." But if the revisionism of *The Wise Men* is so blatant, why has it escaped the notice of everyone else? Ronald Steel, for example, reviewing the book in the New York

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Times, takes precisely the opposite view, deploring that Isaacson and Thomas ignore the revisionist literature entirely and uncritically swallow their heroes' version of the origins of the cold war. Perhaps Mr. Beichman should have sent his complaints to Ronald Steel, who has indeed been guilty in the past (like those Harvard students in the 20's and countless others since then) of associating liberalism with sympathy for the Soviet Union, a historical misunderstanding far more prevalent among intellectuals than among practical men of affairs, during the postwar period at least. And the Wise Men, as Isaacson and Thomas keep telling us, were practical men of affairs. Only Kennan could be considered a card-carrying intellectual, and he was *sui generis*, as everyone knows, neither a liberal nor sympathetic to the Soviet Union, as Mr. Beichman uses these terms.

But what is the point of contesting the paranoia and obduracy of Stalin, so abundantly and gruesomely documented by now, even if his mental make-up did not exclude his "acting like a man who knew what was going on"? Or of concocting some diaphanous distinction to assert that it was the evidence and a jury, not "history, that jade," that found Alger Hiss guilty? Here, in any case, the "blatant revisionism" of Isaacson and Thomas seems to have disappeared. Surely Mr. Beichman, that doughty old anti-anti-anti-Communist, can find darker villainies, nowadays, on which to vent his spleen? The answer, I fear, is that some people have been fighting the Good Fight for so long that they cannot take yes for an answer.

James E. Salyers's suggestion that the extension and presumably the failure of higher education in this country are largely responsible for the incoherence that has overtaken our foreign policy is interesting, and I would not reject it out of hand, although it would seem at first sight (a) to be excessively reductive, (b) to beg the question of cause versus consequence, and (c) to leave equally unaddressed the problem of educational quality versus quantity. In short, Mr. Salyers has opened up a "vast question," to quote General de Gaulle in a rather different connection, and I can only reply that it would require another article, much longer than mine, to begin to deal with it.

Borges's Politics

To the Editor of Commentary:

The same afternoon I read Joseph Epstein's first-rate article, "Señor Borges's Portico" [April], I chanced (in the course of writing another page myself on Borges, for the University of Chicago Press) to reread that author's "The Other." I had already quietly and silently demurred when I read Mr. Epstein's avowal that Borges was altogether nonpolitical in his writings, and "The Other" (which first appeared in English in *Playboy*!) immediately furnished me with Borges on Borges, *politically*. I cite it only as the first piece by Borges which chanced to come to hand. The narrative features two characters: Borges as an old (contemporary with the story) man, and Borges as a young man. The mature Borges mocks the younger Borges's notion of "the brotherhood of man." He asks if the youth "truly felt himself a brother to everyone—to all funeral directors, for example, to all postmen," etc. And when the youth answers that he means "the great mass of the oppressed and alienated," the mellower man says, "Your mass of oppressed and alienated is no more than an abstraction. . . . Only individuals exist. . . ."

In an author's note introducing this story Borges had written: "That adulated platonic entity known as 'the Masses' . . . means nothing to me." He had already said, the experienced Borges had, "Now things are going badly. Russia is taking over the world; America, hampered by the superstition of democracy, can't make up its mind to become an empire." Since this is Borges quoting Borges, it would seem an impeccable, unimpeachable source.

Borges really believed all this, as I can testify. (I translated and edited the first book of Borges put into English—and also the last.) In the last December of his life, I spoke to him in Milan and Rome almost every day for three weeks, at dinner and supper, while I worked with him on the translation of two final Borgesian pieces (soon to appear). He made endless wry comments about radicals—and liberals. He spoke as he had years before in the narrative, or dialogue with himself, quoted above. "It wouldn't surprise me if the teaching of Latin in our schools were replaced by that of Guarani." I told him that the University of Chicago was now (1986) about to offer a course in Cuzco-dialect Quechua. "*Qué horror*!" he exclaimed, "*Qué atroz deterioro para una gran universidad*!" (What an atrocious deterioration for a great university!) Scarcely endearing verbiage for populist ears.

In his autobiographical writings Borges continually called himself a conservative. And there are many people who heard him utter (as I did) a startling pronouncement, when speaking of the American Civil War (the War Between the States): "*Perdimos*!" (*We* lost!) he was wont to mutter. It was his considered judgment on the defeat of the Confederacy. And by "we," he told me, he meant European man. "European man, exiled in the Americas, North and South," he added slyly. And he made this sentiment clear in his writing.

All this from such a nice old blind man! People, especially liberals, simply could not believe their ears, refused to believe their eyes and ears, when they heard (or read) his decidedly anti-liberal, even anti-democratic—and vigorously pro-Zionist views. Borges was as unique politically as he was aesthetically completely alien to the world liberal *Zeitgeist*. It really was no wonder he never won the Nobel Prize for Literature, despite his being repeatedly nominated for it—by Israel. *He* was well aware of why he was not given the award, and his mockery of the Swedish juries was gently devastating. His Zionism cost him dearly. Or at least it cost him something among the supporters of the PLO, of Red Cuba, of the Nicaraguan Sandinistas, all of them opposed to the existence of the Israel of Borges's poems; it cost him among all "progressives" in Sweden, and they are many and pivotal, natural committeemen.

In speaking of Borges one might as well know the whole man—and writer—in toto. Stylish academics and *à la mode* critics would like to like Borges for his fantasy and convolutions, but conveniently, without knowing him whole.

In his fine piece Mr. Epstein does not, of course, obfuscate these facts. He quotes Borges as pointing out that "I am a member of the Conservative party—this in itself is a form of skepticism—and no one has ever branded me a Communist, a nationalist, an anti-Semite. . . ." Borges is quoted further as saying that he never brought his opinions

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into his work, "except once when I was buoyed up in exultation over the Six-Day War." That "exultation," "once," lasted for more or less the next thirty years and certainly did color his work, in several stories and many poems, quite beautifully.

ANTHONY KERRIGAN
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

The American Mind

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I wish to congratulate Allan Bloom on his article, "Liberty, Equality, Sexuality" [April]. It is the humane and heartfelt effort of a civilized man confronting a most daunting and uncivilized prospect: that the twin genies of the American psyche—freedom and equality—have dimmed to such an extent that they serve more to undermine than to inspire a large percentage of the most influential segments of our present and upcoming generations, and that this noxious influence has infiltrated the very core of our social fabric—the relationship between the sexes.

His testimony is sobering news to those who would proffer a political remedy to a problem which is more properly one of cultural, even spiritual, dimensions. For what can it mean to say that we should unite as Americans to support freedom and oppose Soviet tyranny when the reality of this freedom increasingly produces the kind of anemic, dissociated nihilists Mr. Bloom chronicles? Such people are incapable of sustaining the future on even the most basic biological levels, to say nothing of carrying on the higher human heritage of the West.

By deftly illustrating how the habitual bromides of the Right and Left—more freedom, more equality—have actually accelerated rather than restrained our social deterioration, Mr. Bloom enables us to reassert the spiritual foundation that is the necessary underpinning of any political cosmology. . . .

LEONARD BAKKER
Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Allan Bloom is incorrect in saying that the college students whose sexual conduct he describes are not promiscuous "as it used to be understood." That Webster's unabridged dictionary is unequal to the task of defining promiscuity ("not restricted to one sexual partner") may explain, in part, its use, without definition or explanation, in writings on social issues and has invited the plethora of euphemisms for promiscuity in feminist and libertarian literature.

Traditional society has always seen promiscuity as premarital sex with more than one partner without the . . . intention of long-term commitment/marriage—a potential threat to the institution of monogamy. . . . Mr. Bloom's students easily meet both Webster's and traditional society's definition of promiscuity. During the sexual revolution, promiscuity under varied guises has run the gamut from one-night stands to its most conservative form: serial, monogamous, "caring," "meaningful" relationships devoid of the intention of long-term commitment/marriage. . . .

Mr. Bloom does not address the growing signs of reaction to the sexual revolution. For example, some newsworthy feminists are quietly distancing themselves from the sexual posture they once championed and are coming back to more traditional sexual norms. . . . Nevertheless, I found Mr. Bloom's article the best I have read on the subject. . . .

CHARLES R. EWY
Hydes, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the note accompanying Allan Bloom's "Liberty, Equality, Sexuality" he is identified as "the author of *Shakespeare's Politics*." He is also so identified in his new book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, from which the COMMENTARY article is adapted. I have a copy of *Shakespeare's Politics* before me as I write. On both the front and back covers, as on the title page, the author is identified as "Allan Bloom with Harry V. Jaffa." The book is dedicated to "Leo Strauss, our teacher." Whatever became of Harry V. Jaffa?

HARRY V. JAFFA
Claremont, California

ALLAN BLOOM writes:

I apologize to Harry V. Jaffa and promise that this mistake will never be made again, so far as it is in my power.

As to Charles R. Ewy, my dictionary, the OED, does not support the contention that I used the word "promiscuous" loosely.

Feminism & Society

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Since COMMENTARY has so long illumined my days with its ardent intelligence, I was more startled than distressed by Terry Teachout's charges against my book, *Men and Marriage* [Books in Review, April]. I do not believe my position can be fairly summarized as "a woman's place is in the home." I do believe that women should be encouraged to take care of their small children. Because sexual liberalism fosters high rates of abandonment anl illegitimacy (40 percent of all live births in white Sweden; 56 percent in black America), the only alternative to mothers' care is a counterproductive spiral of state child care and police services that grow more inefficient as they expand. But with smaller families, child care takes up a decreasing portion of the ever-lengthening lifespan of women. I wrote a long chapter to show that women have always worked and that their participation in the labor force promotes economic growth and job opportunities for all.

The idea that I—and people like me—are somehow "misogynistic" (i.e., hate half the human race) is entirely unworthy of the pages of your magazine. If anything, my appreciation for women again and again overmasters all my critical faculties. The point about Jeane Kirkpatrick is that possession of an acute conservative intelligence as well as one of the nation's most coveted jobs did not suffice to prevent her from making silly charges of sexism against the men who had exalted her. I concluded that feminism had made fools of some of America's most brilliant conservative women. The recent Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action confirms this view of Sandra Day O'Connor and extends it to most conventional conservative jurists of all sexes and creeds.

Such experiences are the source of the hardening that Mr. Teachout detects in my views. I believe that the American Establishment is so besotted by fantasies of sexual liberation that it is no longer even vaguely willing to protect children and teen-agers from the consequences. Without evangelicals and fundamentalists of all sorts, the U.S. could not have elected Ronald Reagan or stopped ERA, and would not now have a prayer of bringing sanity to the sexual

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scene. Jokes about Jim Bakker aside, let's face it, folks: none of us refined thinkers has a clue on how to get average Americans to fight for conservative causes or to accept family discipline. Conservative intellectuals who await salvation from the college professors and other sophisticated secular sorts who cringe at the truths of *Men and Marriage* will merely gain new opportunities to affirm their prevailing suspicion that democracy inevitably leads to decadence and decline.

GEORGE GILDER
Tyringham, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Terry Teachout once again demonstrates the independence of mind we have come to expect from him in his critical review of George Gilder's anti-feminist book, *Men and Marriage*. Clearly, Mr. Teachout is not going to laud any work just because it is on his side of the political fence. It is therefore the more keenly to be regretted that on one point his criticism of Mr. Gilder is particularly misplaced.

The essential idea of feminism is that the world's evils can be traced to a pervasive oppression of women by men. Progress, in this view, consists in women revolting against male oppression. This leaves only three possible roles for men: as passive bystanders, as deferential supporters, or as the enemies of progress. Consequently it is assumed that any man who ventures critically to appraise feminism is motivated by misogyny (also known as "male chauvinism" and "sexism"). This assumption also fuels a reflexive suspicion that critcism of any woman by a man is criticism of all women.

It is a sign of the near-universal acceptance this doctrine currently enjoys to see as experienced an ideological infighter as Mr. Teachout falling for it in his review of George Gilder's book. Mr. Teachout wonders whether "his gushing admiration for women notwithstanding, Gilder's true notion of their place in civilized society is motivated by something akin to misogyny." What, one wonders, might "something akin to misogyny" be, if not misogyny itself?

He goes on to give just one example to document this charge: that Mr. Gilder criticizes Jeane Kirkpatrick for "whining about sexism and discrimination" when she failed to achieve promotion within the Reagan administration. The fact is that Jeane Kirkpatrick (for whom in other regards I have the greatest respect) really did accuse the Reagan entourage of just these things. Many conservatives—not just Mr. Gilder—were dismayed to hear her claim discrimination merely because, to their way of thinking, she did not agree with their evaluation, but surely it is unlikely they were all misogynists.

The reflexive assumption that critics of feminism are motivated by hatred of women has evidently now penetrated not just the Left but also the Right. That assumption, quite clearly, reflects the belief on some level that feminists actually do speak for women.

The exact opposite would be nearer the truth. With its promise to remake female nature, feminism has had tremendous appeal to those who, for one reason or another, are hostile to women "as they presently exist." It was not Mr. Gilder but Betty Friedan who wrote that women are "inferior to men, dependent, passive, incapable of thought or decision."

What really needs explaining is not that a few men like George Gilder have been motivated to criticize feminism, but that so many Americans, both men and women, have so readily accepted the dogmas of a movement that is manifestly leading us down the primrose path to "sexual suicide."

NICHOLAS DAVIDSON
New York City

TERRY TEACHOUT writes:

I thank George Gilder and Nicholas Davidson for their thoughtful letters. I should say at the outset, since my review seems to have left it unclear, that I am wholly unsympathetic to the agenda of the radical feminist movement. I do not believe, Mr. Davidson notwithstanding, that "the world's evils can be traced to a pervasive oppression of women by men." This notion strikes me as at best paranoiac, at worst malevolent.

Much of my objection to *Men and Marriage* was rooted in strong reservations I had about the manner of presentation. This is what I meant to suggest in distinguishing between misogyny and "something akin to misogyny." Mr. Gilder is not a misogynist. His criticism of Jeane Kirkpatrick, right or wrong, deserves to be taken seriously. His use of the word "whining" is what troubles me, and what I consider to be suggestive of the larger defects of tone and thought that mar *Men and Marriage*. It seems to me that Mr. Gilder's somewhat hysterical style of argument frequently confuses the issues under discussion. This, by the way, is why his book can—and will—be read as advocating that women remove themselves from the workplace.

There was, of course, another point to my review, one that neither Mr. Gilder nor Mr. Davidson takes up. Mr. Gilder, if I read him right, believes that the widest possible dissemination of "the truths of *Men and Marriage*" will help restore "sanity" to the American sexual scene. But feminist ideas are now pervasive in American society, and the society has reshaped itself accordingly. No democracy is hospitable to radical reform—and the agenda outlined in *Men and Marriage* is nothing if not radical. (If Mr. Gilder thinks that the election of Ronald Reagan ushered in a period of radical reform, he should think again.) I suspect that a more realistic agenda, not to mention a more temperate style of argument, will be needed to convince the unconvinced, of whom there are more than Mr. Davidson thinks.

Finally, whether or not "democracy inevitably leads to decadence and decline" is an interesting question. But it isn't the question I was addressing in my review.

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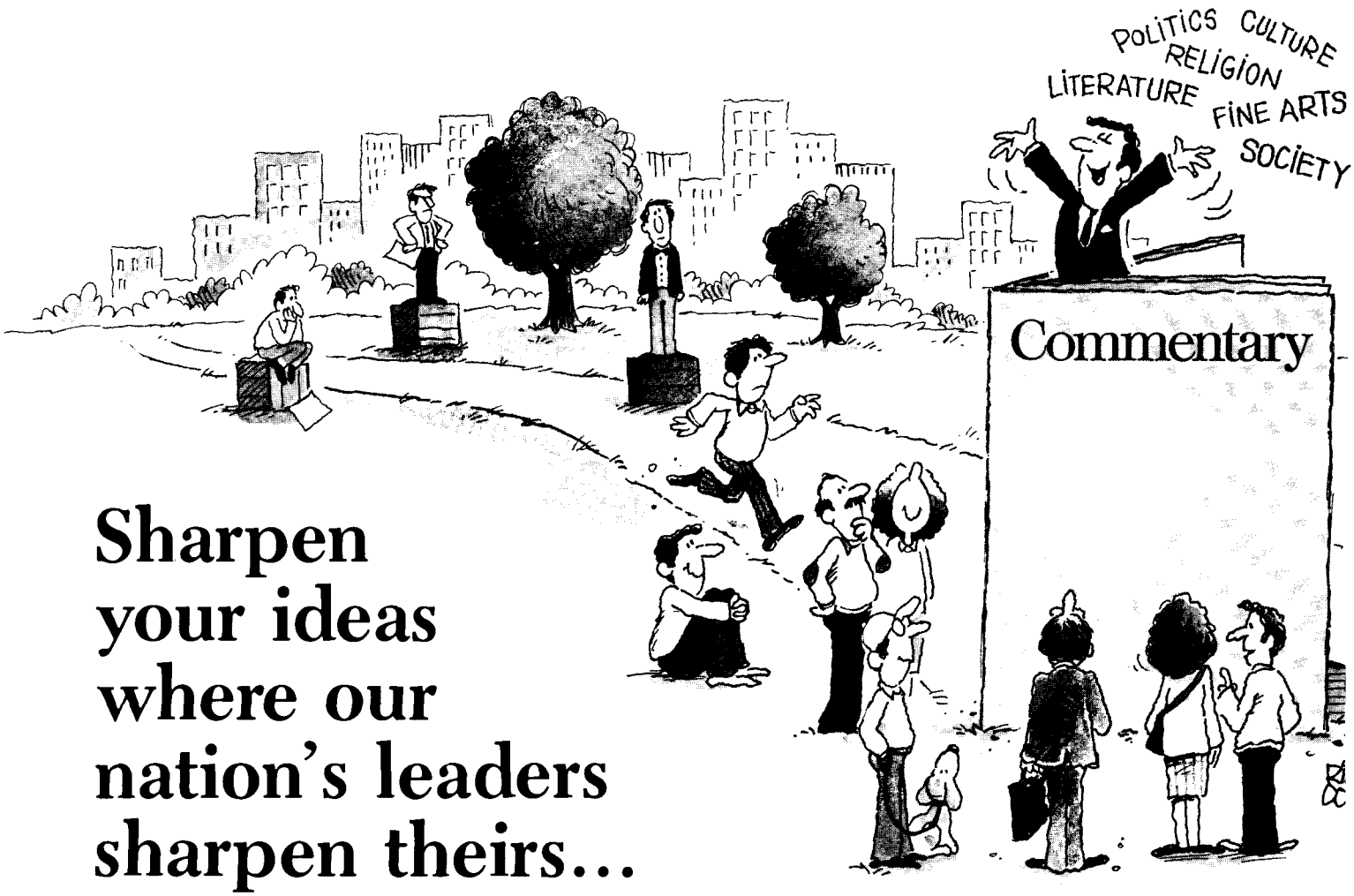

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Arab vs. Arab Over Palestine

Daniel Pipes

As we have once again been reminded by the great debate over the desirability of an international conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict, that conflict is generally assumed to be about the competing claims of the Jews and the Palestinians to the same piece of land. Yet the truth is that the Arabs disagree, sometimes violently, among themselves as to who should rule Palestine and even where its rightful boundaries lie.

Thus President Hafez al-Assad of Syria maintains that he has the right to rule Palestine because it is "an essential part of Southern Syria." Yasir Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) turns the relationship around, claiming rights not only to Palestine but to Syria as well. A similar disagreement exists between King Hussein of Jordan and the PLO. The king believes Palestine is his: "Jordan is Palestine, and Palestine is Jordan." Yasir Arafat stakes an opposite claim: "Jordan is ours, Palestine is ours, and we shall build our national entity on the whole of this land after having freed it of both the Zionist presence and the reactionary-traitor presence" (of King Hussein).

The Arab disagreement goes further, as the PLO contains many factions, each of which aspires to ultimate control over land taken from Israel. In addition, other Middle East heads of state—including Muammar al-Qaddafi of Libya and Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran—seek the decisive voice in any Arab polity to be established in Palestine.

These competing ambitions are not momentary breaches in the otherwise unified Arab position, but deep and abiding divisions that, more than the Arab confrontation with Israel itself, constitute the center of gravity in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The fact that so many Arab parties lay claim to Israel's territory renders accommodation unlikely, and prolongs a conflict that otherwise might be settled. Indeed, differences among the Arab states determine the future course of that conflict far more than do actions by Israel, the United States, or the Soviet Union.

Four Arab groups have had the longest and most important historical roles in the Arab struggle for Palestine: Palestinian separatists, Arab nationalists, the Jordanian government, and the Syrian government. Actors of secondary importance include fundamentalist Muslims and West Bank notables. Finally, Egypt, too, has had a special place.

Palestinian Separatists

The standard of this group, often known as Palestinian nationalists, has been carried since 1964 by the PLO. Palestinian separatists envisage, in the area that Israel now controls, an independent state possessing all the conventional signs of sovereignty—borders, customs, embassies, a flag, an army, and membership in the United Nations. The Palestinian separatist claim dominated Arab efforts to control Palestine during two periods: from late 1920 to the declaration of Israel's statehood in 1948, and from the Six-Day War of June 1967 to the battle for Beirut in 1982.

Palestine as a distinct political entity did not exist in the period of Muslim rule, from 634 to 1917. During these centuries, which saw ten changes of Muslim dynasties, Palestine was submerged within larger political units; it simply did not appear on the political map.

Even the name "Palestine" itself initially aroused hostility among Muslims, since it had long been associated with Judaism and Christianity and was introduced into the modern Middle Eastern political vocabulary as a by-product of British conquest in 1917, and then only to designate the site of the "national home for the Jewish people" promised by the Balfour Declaration. When in late 1920 the local Arabs adopted the Palestinian identity, they saw it as a tool with which to combat the British rulers and Zionist colonizers; otherwise it had little appeal for them. With the passage of time, however, the Muslims of Palestine grew attached to this identity, and it became a powerful source of allegiance. From 1920 until 1948, led by the Mufti of Jerusalem,

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al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni, Palestinian separatists dominated the Arab claim to Palestine.

In drawing up plans for Palestine, the British and the UN expected the local Arabs to form an independent nation. But with the proclamation of Jewish statehood in 1948, Jordan, Syria, and Egypt invaded Palestine and occupied portions of it. Settlements made after the war ignored the Palestinians as an independent political factor. As a result, Palestinian separatism weakened; by the late 1950's, it was nearly defunct.

During this period the conflict with Israel was dominated by the Arab states. It was the Egyptian government, indeed, that revived the Palestinian separatist ideology in 1959 and five years later sponsored the PLO's establishment. Cairo's intent was to control and use the Palestinians, and it did so for some time. During this same period Palestinian separatists had to portray victory over Israel not as an end in itself but as a means toward achieving Arab unity. When the UN Security Council passed Resolution 242 in November 1967 it called for "a just settlement of the refugee problem" without mentioning the Palestinians as a political unit.

It was only in the aftermath of the 1967 war that Palestinian separatism reemerged as a significant force in its own right. The terrible military defeat suffered by Syria, Jordan, and Egypt prompted many Arabs, especially Arab nationalists, to seek an alternative approach to the struggle with Israel. In a supremely romantic move ("If we all die except for one pregnant woman, her child will liberate Palestine"), they turned away from the established states and placed their faith in the unproven and undermanned Palestinian separatist guerrilla organization, the PLO.

The PLO enjoyed fifteen years of unique prominence. No other irredentist movement has had such financial, military, and diplomatic backing. With an annual budget of several hundreds of millions of dollars, quasi-state authority in Beirut and south Lebanon, and wide international support, the PLO acted as though it were the major opponent of Israel. Its claim to Palestine grew so strong that many observers, especially in the West, forgot that other Arab factions had different plans for Palestine. Politically, the Arab-Israeli conflict turned in those years into a Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

PLO strength, however, was always precarious. Although the organization enjoyed a salient place in world politics, it suffered from the lack of a secure base. Finally the PLO came crashing down in the summer of 1982, when Israel eliminated it from Beirut and south Lebanon. Syria finished the job when it drove the PLO from its remaining strongholds in north Lebanon in December 1983. With these developments, the PLO lost its hold on the Arab claim for Palestine. As Jordan and Syria have become stronger, the PLO has had to cooperate with one or the other of them.

Over a period of seven decades certain patterns have characterized the behavior of Palestinian separatists. Most important are their extremism and their factionalism. First the Mufti's Supreme Muslim Council and then the PLO have rejected every compromise—partition plans in the former case, negotiations in the latter. Palestinian separatists refused the Peel Plan of 1937 and the United Nations plan of 1947. They failed to amend the Palestine National Charter with its call for the destruction of Israel and they let negotiations with King Hussein fall through in 1983 and 1986. Intransigence has left the separatists without concrete achievements or a territory of their own.

Palestinian separatists also tend to splinter. Although the outside world knows the PLO as a single body, it is in fact made up of almost a dozen fractious groupings advocating contrary programs. One Palestinian group is pro-Syrian, another pro-Iraqi, and so forth. They disagree on ideology (Marxist or fundamentalist Islamic?) and on personnel (who should lead—the Nashashibi or Husayni family, al-Fatah or the PFLP, As-Sa'iqa or Abu Nidal, the West Bank notables or yet others?).

From the late 1930's to the present, financial, diplomatic, and military backing for the Palestinian separatists has come mostly from non-Palestinians. Kings and presidents of Arabic-speaking states have been the primary donors; in recent years the Soviet bloc has also contributed heavily. This dependence on outside benefactors goes far to explain the movement's extremism and factionalism. Because the Arab governments most hostile to Israel—Syria, Iraq, Libya—have provided most of the PLO's support, their influence has made it impossible for the PLO to adopt tactics sufficiently pragmatic to achieve its goals.

The Arab governments' influence also works against the unity of Palestinian separatists. As early as the 1930's, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and Iraq backed opposing Palestinian factions; other states, such as Libya and Saudi Arabia, joined the fray later. Each government pressures the Palestinian separatists to act according to its interests. Thus it is that inter-Arab and international politics, not the interests of Palestinians, drive the actions of the PLO.

The Palestinian separatist movement in general flourishes to the extent that inter-Arab harmony prevails, while inter-Arab conflict tears the Palestinian groups apart, as fighting among PLO sponsors spills over to the PLO itself. (In 1976-77, for example, Palestian groups in Lebanon conducted a miniature version of the battle then taking place between Syria and Iraq.) The PLO faces a permanent dilemma: accept state aid and be subservient, or refuse it and be weak.

Still, despite all these drawbacks, Arab residents of Palestine are these days increasingly attracted to Palestinian separatism—which in practice

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means the PLO. In part, this is due to the inability of other claimants—Arab nationalists, Jordan, Syria—to provide a fixed and clear alternative to the Palestinian identity. In part, too, it results from the fact that the others have recognized Palestinian separatism as the most legitimate claimant and, rhetorically at least, have subsumed their own claims to it.

Palestinian separatism is tied to the PLO; without it, observes Akram Haniya, chairman of the Arab Journalists Association of the Occupied Territories, "we will be orphans." Even those Palestinians who support the Arab nationalist, Jordanian, or Syrian claim to Palestine feel obliged to express allegiance to Yasir Arafat. Indeed, Arafat has personally come to symbolize the Palestinians' effort to gain control over their lives, and that means that his strength is to some degree independent of the PLO itself, and unrelated to his failures as a leader. One specialist, Matti Steinberg, has gone so far as to say that "the more [the PLO] is enfeebled as a body, the stronger Arafat becomes."

Arab Nationalists

PALESTINIAN separatism is often confused with Arab nationalism, though the goals of the two are incompatible. The former aspires to make Palestine a fully independent country, while the latter would integrate it into a much larger entity, the Arab nation. Arab nationalists—also called Pan-Arab nationalists or Pan-Arabists—hope to build a state that will eventually comprise all Arabic-speakers between the Atlantic Ocean and the Persian Gulf, from Morocco to Oman, of which Palestine will be a small province.

For Arab nationalists, the liberation of Palestine will occur only when the Arabs are unified—at the least closely allied, at best joined in a single state. Their slogan, "Arab Unity—The Way to Palestine," contrasts with the Palestinian separatists' slogan, "Palestine—The Way to Arab Unity." Conveniently for the Arab nationalists, their outlook justifies an indefinite postponement of the conflict against Israel.

Arab nationalists have a long record of fickle behavior toward Palestine. They sometimes portray anti-Zionism as the paramount issue of Arab nationalism, referring to it on every occasion, insisting that it motivates everything else. At other times, when more pressing business is at hand—as in the decade between Suez and the Six-Day War—they ignore the issue, arguing that Arab unity must come first.

As Palestinian separatism faltered in the 1940's, Arab nationalists inherited some of the claim to Palestine. They emerged as a dominant force, however, only in the mid-1950's, when the president of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, mesmerized Arabic speakers with his vision of the grandeur and power of a united Arab people. Victory against Israel was to demonstrate that power; for Nasser, Palestine would be the nucleus of a Pan-Arab state. But Nasser went to war against Israel too soon, and in June 1967 suffered the repudiation of his dreams. Military defeat provided an opening for all those, such as the Saudi royal family, who had been threatened by Nasser's radical ideas and political ambitions; they turned to the Palestinian movement, which seemed to offer less direct danger to their authority. In Egypt, too, Nasser's successors virtually abandoned the Arab stage to remedy the domestic ills he had left behind.

Arab nationalism continues to have its proponents, but none so popular or powerful as Nasser. His most vocal heir is Colonel Qaddafi of Libya, who, far more than Nasser himself, sees Palestine as central to the drive for Arab unity. To a lesser degree, Iraq and Saudi Arabia also propound Arab nationalist ideas, but their ideolgies are diluted by parochial concerns. Today, Arab nationalism is in deep eclipse.

Jordan

THE kingdom of Jordan occupies a part of the historic region which before 1918 included the territory of the present states of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel, and which is known as Greater Syria (to distinguish it from the modern Syrian state). Pan-Syrian nationalism is the ideology calling for the realization of Greater Syria, and the rulers of Jordan have been attracted to its goals. Amman no less than Damascus has seen itself from time to time as the rightful claimant to Greater Syria—if not to all of it, then most especially to that part of it called Palestine.

Jordan has had two major kings, Abdullah, who ruled from 1921 to 1951, and his grandson Hussein, who has ruled since 1953. Both of them have aspired to Palestine. Abdullah aimed to rule it from the moment that Jordan (then called Transjordan) came into existence in March 1921. He claimed the religious and political leadership of Palestine in 1934; in 1938, he presented a memorandum to the British government calling for Palestine's unity with Transjordan under his rule.

An opportunity to seize Palestinian territory came in 1948 when Great Britain gave up its Mandate. With British cooperation, the Transjordanian army had already occupied parts of Palestine by the time imperial troops evacuated in May 1948. It subsequently attacked the fledgling state of Israel and captured the territory that came to be known as the West Bank. Transjordan was renamed Jordan in June 1949 and the West Bank became part of Jordan in April 1950. Only Great Britain and Pakistan recognized this incorporation of the West Bank; the Arab states, unwilling to accept the Jordanian claim to Palestine, refused to sanction Abdullah's land grab.

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Acting under pressure from Arab rivals, Abdullah's grandson Hussein attacked Israel in June 1967. But his army failed, and instead of winning more of Palestine, he lost the West Bank. Subsequent efforts by Hussein to maintain his claim to this territory were thwarted by the Arab states. At a meeting in October 1974, Jordan was compelled by the Arab rulers to accept the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in any Palestinian territory that is liberated." To make matters worse, King Hussein had to agree to cooperate with the PLO, Syria, and Egypt to ensure the implementation of this resolution.

The king's verbal assent did not, of course, mean he had actually given up the longstanding Jordanian claim. Hussein's opportunity to reassert that claim came after the PLO's 1982-83 losses in Lebanon. The Reagan Initiative of September 1982 called for "self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan"—in effect, a statement of American preference for the return of the West Bank to Jordan. Buoyed by this support, Hussein publicly reentered West Bank diplomacy for the first time since 1974.

The king announced in February 1986 that he spoke "as one who feels he is a Palestinian." His government talked less of "Occupied Palestine" and more of the "Occupied West Bank." A Ministry of Occupied Territories was established in Amman. The ministry's May 1986 publication, *Occupied Land Affairs*, featured a map of Mandatory Palestine on its cover implying a Jordanian claim to the whole of Palestine.*

As for the PLO, it acknowledged Jordan's new strength and its own decline when it agreed to discuss a joint negotiating position with Jordan. The PLO brought Arab legitimacy to Jordan; Jordan brought U.S. support and some Israeli favor to the PLO. Their joint effort faced only one obstacle: disagreement on the critical question of who would control any territories given up by Israel. This obstacle proved insuperable.

CERTAIN characteristics have distinguished the Jordanian position over a period of sixty-six years: enmity toward the Palestinian separatists, friendship with the West, pragmatism, disagreement with the Arab consensus, and stable working relations with the Jews.

Jordan has been the premier rival of the Palestinian separatists. In the pre-1948 period, Abdullah's ambitions clashed with those of Mufti al-Husayni, leading to an undying hostility between the two. And what Barry Rubin has written of that earlier period—"the conflict between the Mufti's desire for an independent Arab state under his leadership and Abdullah's goal was as great as the gap between the Mufti and the Zionists"—applies equally well today to the Arafat-Hussein-Israel triangle. Asked in 1983 about the possibility of discussions among himself, the PLO, and Israel, King Hussein is said to have muttered, "The Israeli part will be easy."

To enhance their claim to the West Bank, Jordanian monarchs have repeatedly sought to demonstrate their popularity there. Just as Abdullah organized West Bankers in late 1948 to implore him to become their sovereign, so Hussein arranged in March 1986 for what his state-controlled press called "grateful" delegations from the West Bank to appear before him, offering support for his challenge to Yasir Arafat.

Both kings have positioned themselves as the favorite of the prevailing Western power of the time. Just as British authorities preferred Abdullah over the Mufti, the Americans prefer Hussein to the PLO. In contrast, the Mufti worked with Hitler and Arafat is closely tied to Moscow.

While other Arab leaders before 1948 insisted on the eradication of Zionism, Abdullah accepted the Jews' presence in Palestine and aspired to bring them under his own control. He signed a treaty with the British endorsing the Balfour Declaration, offered to sell or lease land to Zionists who would acknowledge his rule, and even used the Palestinian currency, with its Hebrew inscriptions, in his kingdom. His grandson Hussein no longer hopes to attract Jews to Jordan, but he does treat Israel in a realistic, nonideological manner and relies on diplomacy rather than force. Winning their Jewish neighbors' good will has been a constant goal of the Jordanian kings.

Israelis respond to Jordanian pragmatism. They saw Abdullah as the least hostile Arab leader and made efforts to come to terms with him. They helped save Hussein's throne from Iraqi troops in 1958 and from the PLO in 1970. More recently, Israel has acquiesced in some Jordanian arms purchases from the United States. Cooperation on the West Bank since 1967 has been quiet but far-reaching. In addition to maintaining open borders with Jordan, the Israelis have administered the West Bank, in Bernard Lewis's 1975 description, "as occupied Jordanian territory, using Jordanian currency, collecting Jordanian taxes, applying Jordanian law, and conducting local government, education, and public services in accordance with Jordanian practice. They even continued to refer many questions to Amman for approval or decision, thus moving toward a kind of condominium." Though this policy was followed less fully during the Begin years, it is again in effect.

* Although usually unwilling to publicize its claim to Palestine, for fear of adverse Arab response, the Jordanian government does so when it feels particularly confident. Thus, in 1949 a Jordanian stamp was issued with a portrait of Abdullah next to the words "The Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan" and "Palestine"; fifteen years later, Hussein even more audaciously pictured himself on a stamp and next to him a map showing Jordan stretched from its present borders to the Mediterranean Sea.

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Bilateral relations go far beyond the West Bank. Trade is considerable, foreign tourists travel from one country to the other, water is allotted according to quotas, anti-terrorist measures are implemented, and borders have been twice adjusted. But most revealing have been the many face-to-face discussions among leaders of the two sides. Repeated meetings between November 1947 and March 1950 constituted the first round of this relationship; the second took place between September 1963 and August 1977; the third appears to have begun in October 1985, when Hussein and Shimon Peres met; these two talked most recently in London in early April 1987.

Given Jordan's weaknesses—a small and divided population, limited military force, few resources, and Arab opposition to Amman's claim to Palestine—pragmatism makes good sense. Jordan's greatest strength vis-à-vis its Arab rivals lies in the fact that, should Israel decide to evacuate any part of the West Bank and Gaza, Amman can expect to be its negotiating partner of choice. In other words, the Jordanian hope to control parts of Palestine depends not on Arab support but on Israeli preference. In an exact reversal of the situation of the PLO, Jordan's claim to Palestine loses force when the Arab states reach a consensus, for such a consensus is invariably hostile to Jordanian ambitions. When the Arab states disagree among themselves, Jordan tends to gain more scope to work with Israel. Thus, the current effort to convene an Israel-Jordan peace conference with wide Arab backing is inherently oxymoronic.

Syria

As I have argued previously in these pages, the custom of viewing Palestine as a part of Greater Syria has persisted in Damascus for decades.* After winning their own independence from France in 1946, the rulers of Syria, although weak and unstable, rejected their country's borders with vehemence. Syrian armies attacked the nascent Jewish state in 1948 and emerged from the war controlling the village of al-Hamma. Like Jordan, Syria annexed what it held in Palestine; although the territory was too small to have political import, it indicated the intentions of the Syrian regime. A Syrian delegate to the armistice conference between Syria and Israel made these intentions explicit, announcing that "there is no international border between Israel and Syria."

As the years passed, Syrian leaders continued to reassert their claim. Its own president in 1953 referred to Syria as "the current official name for that country which lies within the artificial borders drawn up by imperialism"—an extraordinary remark by a head of state. Syria's delegate to the UN Security Council observed in 1967 that it was Syria "from which Palestine was severed and from the territory of which Israel was created."

These assertions acquired additional force in 1974, when the regime of Hafez al-Assad made Greater Syria a central foreign-policy theme. Since then, Syrian officials have repeatedly argued that Palestine is Southern Syria. According to Assad, "There is no Palestinian people, there is no Palestinian entity, there is only Syria! . . . It is we, the Syrian authorities, who are the real representatives of the Palestinian people." Damascus Radio announced in June 1980 that "Syria views Palestine—according to historic, cultural, and geographic factors—as its own southern province."

Such talk may appeal to Syrians, but it arouses an almost unanimous opposition outside Syria. Palestinians, other Arabs, Israelis, and the great powers all reject Syrian ambitions. Handicapped by a morally weak claim, Damascus must rely on a combination of dissimulation and military strength. In fact, the Syrian government usually downplays its Pan-Syrian goals by supporting one of the most acceptable claimants. When Arab nationalism predominated in the 1950's and 1960's, the Syrian government espoused a Pan-Arabist solution for Palestine and tried, without success, to dominate the Arab nationalist movement. When Palestinian separatism became the acceptable solution, Syrian leaders changed their tune and quickly tried to take over that movement.

Military strength is the second major theme of Syria's claim. Long after Israel's other neighbors have given up hope of taking on the Israelis, raw power remains a hallmark of the Damascus approach. In recent years, Syrian rulers have spoken repeatedly of achieving "strategic parity" with Israel, and indeed since 1982 an abundance of advanced matériel supplied by the Soviet Union has helped make Syrian forces far more formidable than ever before. Jordan can be flexible; Arab nationalists can ignore Israel; the PLO could some day renounce the military option; but Syria has to use force.

Other Claimants

IN ADDITION to the four main claimants discussed so far, two groups have emerged in recent years that may in the future become major actors: fundamentalist Muslims and local Palestinian residents.

The fundamentalist Muslim claim to Palestine resembles that of Arab nationalists in that both see Palestine as a part of something much larger and grander. But whereas Arab nationalists stress the community of Arabic-speakers, fundamentalists stress the community of Muslims. To them geography, language, and ethnic background pale in importance beside religion. They emphasize two points: that Palestine is a historic part of the Muslim patrimony; and that the almost two mil-

* "Palestine for the Syrians?" COMMENTARY, December 1986.

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lion Muslims at present living under Israeli control must win political sovereignty. Fundamentalist Muslims therefore call for *jihad* (war in accord with Islamic laws) against Israel.

Islamic claims to Palestine have long motivated the Saudi government, but fundamentalist Islam joined the competition in a serious way only after the rise of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. Since then, the Iranian government claims an Islamic (rather than an Arab) basis for gaining a voice in the disposition of Palestine. Radio Teheran asserts that "Nobody has the right to claim the representation of the Palestinians except the religious commander of the Muslim nation" (i.e., Khomeini). To support this claim, Iranians were sent to Lebanon where, in addition to battling Israel, they spread Iranian ideas to the Shi'is, to inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza, and even to some elements of the PLO.

Although far weaker than the other factions, fundamentalist Islam is fresh, dynamic, and attractive to the young. It approaches Israel with an intransigence like that of the Palestinian separatists—but also with an opportunism that resembles that of the Arab nationalists. Thus, for the war against Iraq major deliveries of American weapons were acquired by Iran through Israel.

A second group with growing importance consists of the Arabs living in Palestine—the residents of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem, and Israel proper—with West Bankers usually leading the way. Increasingly educated, sophisticated, and connected to the outside world, they have made enormous gains in stature since 1967. West Bank notables differ from the PLO in many ways: they are not extremist, not deeply divided on methods, and do not demand Israel's destruction. Having a presence on the ground, they enjoy a legitimacy that may exceed the PLO's and a flexibility greater than Jordan's.

Despite these advantages, the West Bank leaders have until now almost always deferred to the PLO. More and more, however, they do so with impatience. For example, the Gazan leader, Rashad ash-Shawwa, recently told an interviewer that "the PLO should adopt the Palestinian people's opinions and not impose decisions on them." The time may soon come for resident Palestinians to take decisions on their own; when that happens, they will probably emerge as a potent rival to Jordan for Israel's favor.

Egypt

EGYPTIAN leaders usually do not want to control Palestine. In 1948-49, Egypt, like Jordan and Syria, occupied a portion of Mandatory Palestine. Unlike Jordan and Syria, however, it did not annex its Palestinian territory, the Gaza Strip, nor did it reclaim Gaza after losing it in 1967. Gaza did not even come up as an issue during the 1973-79 negotiations when Egypt won back the Sinai Peninsula.

Although it stakes no claim to Palestine, Egypt's leading role in the Arab-Israeli conflict nevertheless makes it worthy of special consideration. Precisely because the Egyptian government does not claim Palestine, it enjoys a freedom of action foreclosed to the PLO, Jordan, and Syria. In theory, it can support any claimant and advocate any ideology. In fact, since Cairo wants neither Jordan nor Syria to expand into Palestine, its choice is narrowed to Arab nationalism or Palestinian separatism. Each implies a particular course of action.

Hoisting the flag of Arab nationalism was a way for Gamal Abdel Nasser to crown himself the leading politician of the Middle East in the early 1950's. Although he devoted less energy to Israel than to inter-Arab matters, the conflict with Israel provided many benefits. It offered him a cause to mobilize Egypt's population, a justification to build up Egypt's military forces, and a pretext to become involved in the internal affairs of other Arab states. It also gave him a means to extract aid from outside powers and a stage on which to achieve personal self-aggrandizement. As a PLO spokesman candidly put it in 1969, Nasser "uses the Palestine cause to suit his own policies."

But the campaign against Israel became counterproductive—failing to arouse the Egyptian populace, exacerbating social tensions, creating large military forces that threatened the civilian politicians' control, driving the government into debt, causing tensions with other Arab states, and inviting intervention by the great powers. In the end, Egypt not only gave up leadership of the Arab nationalist claim, it withdrew from the conflict. Anwar al-Sadat negotiated for return of the Sinai Peninsula; except for a few nominal gestures, his successor Hosni Mubarak has avoided making any Egyptian sacrifices on behalf of the Palestinian issue.

To extricate themselves from an expensive and hopeless cause, Egyptian leaders turned from Arab nationalism to Palestinian separatism—which for them was really a mask for disengagement. As early as the late 60's the PLO realized that Egyptian support was aimed not at destroying Israel but at regaining the Sinai.

THESE, then, are the Arab claimants to Palestine. In order to see them in comparative perspective, perhaps the first thing to bear in mind is that each of them has a different plan for Palestine. Two of them rather exactly specify borders. For Palestinian separatists, the region at a minimum includes the whole of Palestine as it existed under the British Mandate; not just the West Bank and Gaza Strip but also all of Israel. Maximally, it includes the whole of the Palestine territory as it existed in 1920-21—that is, including Jordan too. The Jordanian government, which agrees with this maximalist view, differs

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only in calling the territory Jordan and intending to control it all by expanding westward rather than eastward.

Arab nationalists and the Syrian government pay little regard to exact boundaries; however defined, Palestine for them constitutes merely one province of a much larger state. Arab nationalists emphasize that the struggle for Palestine will help break down divisions among existing Arab states. Syrian authorities see the region as part of a Greater Syria.

Another point to remember in looking at the Arab rivals is that some of them derive support from a dream, others from a state apparatus. Palestinian separatists and Arab nationalists (and fundamentalist Muslims) possess ideologies whose appeal transcends geography; the Jordanian and Syrian claims, by contrast, are state-sponsored efforts. Each of these types shows a distinct pattern of political activity, and distinct advantages and disadvantages.

The first two carry a powerful moral weight which wins them support among all Arabs; just as Palestinian separatism appeals to many Jordanians and Syrians, Arab nationalism appeals to many Palestinians. The idealism of these visions attracts many of the brightest and most motivated Arabs; but the absence of reliable state support restricts their influence. No government consistently espouses their doctrines or can be counted on in time of crisis: *raison d'état* always prevails over dreams. The PLO has been abandoned by its sponsors in every crisis—in Jordan in 1970, in Lebanon in 1976, 1982, and 1983. As for Arab nationalism, except for a period under Nasser from 1956 to 1967, it too has lacked the force of arms. Its primary advocate today, Qaddafi of Libya, is a distant reed. In the end, this weakness is probably fatal.

Although Jordanian and Syrian claims are also based on a nationalist ideology—Pan-Syrianism—they rely on government support: decade after decade, authorities in Amman and Damascus put forward the solution most favorable to themselves. But this too entails disadvantages, for *raison d'état* loses every test of popularity. Support for Jordanian and Syrian claims is therefore restricted to those who stand to gain from them. Hence Khalil Wazir, Arafat's deputy, could dismiss PLO members working for organizations under Syrian aegis: "We are not afraid of those people. Their voice does not go beyond the Syrian border." Nonetheless, the advantages of working with an existing state should not be underestimated. "Arafat may have the hearts and minds of the West Bank people," Thomas L. Friedman of the New York *Times* has written, "but King Hussein has their pocketbooks, passports, trade links with the Arab world, bank accounts, and many of their salaries." Assad, who today sponsors more armed Palestinians than does Arafat, also has considerable means at his disposal.

Because Jordanian and Syrian claims to Palestine are hardly recognized outside their own countries, the two governments rarely make their intentions publicly known, disguising them instead under the cover of humanitarian concern for the Palestinians. Jordan has some difficulty with this pretense, having ruled the West Bank in the past and transparently hoping to do so again. But Syrian rulers promote themselves with a great flourish as champions of the Palestinian cause. Damascus lauds the PLO on a daily basis.

The Jordanian and Syrian governments have historically compensated in different ways for the illegitimacy of their claims in Arab circles. Jordan challenges the Palestinian separatists on their own turf, competing for influence and votes on the West Bank and legitimacy in inter-Arab politics. Abdullah and the Mufti were direct rivals, as are Hussein and Arafat. Syria does not compete; it tries to control the Palestinian separatists and to use them for its own ends. The Syrian tactic has been much the smarter; while Hussein is impugned as an obstacle to Palestinian aspirations, Assad presents himself as their champion. (But Hussein may be learning; after his unsuccessful efforts to cooperate with Arafat, he adopted the Syrian practice of sponsoring his own pro-Jordanian Palestinian group in March 1986.)

These efforts by the Syrian and Jordanian governments to seize the mantle of Palestinian separatist legitimacy appear doomed to failure so long as Yasir Arafat heads the PLO. But his passing from the scene could open real opportunities for the two states. Accordingly, both Amman and Damascus—which normally agree on very little—early in 1986 called for Arafat's replacement as head of the PLO.

As THESE differences suggest, the goals of the various Arab claimants are, in the final analysis, incompatible. And that is why competition among them, verbal or physical, has been much more common than cooperation. Palestinian separatists and Jordan have a history of intense rivalry; the Mufti and Abdullah battled through the 1930's and 1940's, and their descendants, Arafat and Hussein, went to war in 1970. Nasser's Pan-Arabism brought him into conflict with all three other contenders for Palestine. The Arab nationalist government of Iraq fought an undercover war to impose its views on the PLO in mid-1978.

But the main conflict of recent years has been between Syria and the Palestinian separatists. Syrian attempts to control Al-Fatah began in the mid-1960's and when Arafat succeeded in throwing off Syrian influence, Damascus responded by founding a new Palestinian organization, As-Sa'iqa. The struggle escalated in 1976, when Syrian forces went into Lebanon to prevent the PLO from dominating that country. In early 1983, Assad helped split the PLO and again spon-

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sored his own Palestinian organizations, which were later grouped together as the Palestine National Salvation Front. With Libyan help, Syria eliminated the last independent PLO bases in Lebanon in late 1983. Since 1985, Syrian-backed Shi'i forces in Beirut have battered the PLO.

The Syrian challenge to the PLO displays many of the underlying themes in inter-Arab politics. It shows, first, the advantages of statehood. For example, in late June 1983, while on Syrian soil, Arafat publicly blamed the mutiny in Fatah on the Syrian government; the next day he was hustled to the Damascus airport and put on a regular scheduled flight to Tunis. Second, the Syrian-PLO dispute illustrates that cooperation among Arab claimants to Palestine is a function of one competitor's becoming unusually strong; at that point the others feel compelled to join together to resist him. Thus, the success of Syria stimulated the PLO and Jordan, with Egypt's blessing, to initiate negotiations, and prompted the PLO to make common cause with fundamentalist Muslims opposed to the Assad regime. Third, the Syrian-PLO conflict provides a window on the high passions characterizing relations among the Arab claimants. Arafat, for instance, has accused the Syrians of committing a greater treason than did Sadat when he made peace with Israel, and the Syrian government has replied in kind, calling Arafat a "traitor," an "agent of Satan," and a "prostitute."

Such vituperation bears close attention, for it provides an unusual glimpse into what are probably the candid feelings of the Arab rivals toward each other, feelings normally disguised under professions of brotherhood.

To SUM UP: among the Arab rivals the PLO enjoys the greatest legitimacy and the widest Arab and international support; it suffers from the most fragile institutions, a lack of consensus, and an incapacity to resist extremism. Arab nationalists have the strength of a dream and the weakness that goes with the absence of state support. Jordan has the favor of Israel and the predominant Western power; but its claim lacks legitimacy among the Arabs. Syria has the same weakness; it tries to make up for it not by developing relations with Israel but by ideological extremism and military strength.

Major military defeats at the hands of Israel—1948-49, 1967, and 1982—have marked the great turning points, discrediting some claims and boosting others. The Palestinian separatist view dominated until Israel's establishment in 1948, after which Nasser's Arab nationalism held first place. The 1967 war propelled Palestinian separatism to the forefront. The PLO's evacuation from Lebanon in 1982 allowed the Syrians to push their claim forward in competition with Jordan.

It is now the Syrian era. Should Damascus fail, none of the traditional claimants is likely to emerge as its successor. Arab nationalism and Palestinian separatism are proven failures, and Jordan has no prospect of winning general Arab approval. This points to the emergence of new forces, the fundamentalist Muslims and the West Bank notables; if either acquires a leading voice, it will mark the first major structural change in the rivalry for Palestine since the 1920's.

INTER-ARAB relations rather than Arab-Israeli relations are the cause of political volatility in the Middle East. Meetings of the Arab League, subsidies given to the PLO, press denunciations of Arab leaders who negotiate with Israel, terrorism against Arab diplomats, and the like drive the conflict far more than such factors as Israeli policy on the West Bank or U.S. willingness to sell arms to Saudi Arabia. Ironically, relations between Arab states and Jews have only secondary importance, Israeli-Palestinian relations only tertiary importance. Israel's lack of diplomatic relations with the Arab states matters less than Egypt's.

Inter-Arab rivalry sheds light on many vexing questions of Middle Eastern politics. To begin with, there is no single unit called "the Arabs," at least with reference to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The perpetual incapacity of the Arabs to unify is a problem not of fractious personalities but of irreconcilable goals. Short of several actors' withdrawing their claims to Palestine, Arab disunity over this issue will continue indefinitely.

Inter-Arab rivalries also help us understand the place of that most elusive institution, the PLO. Several points bear stressing here. As a rule, Arab leaders find it easier to mouth pieties about "Palestinian rights" than to dismiss the Palestinian claim in favor of their own. This is what the Egyptian journalist Muhammad Hasanayn Heikal calls "smothering the PLO with loving caresses." Similarly, the weaker an Arab leader, the more he tends to seek PLO legitimation. Finally, a state's support for Palestinian separatism tends to increase in proportion to the distance between its borders and Israel's.

If the Arab states have their own designs on Israel, it follows that "Palestinian rights" are much less important to the Arab-Israeli conflict than it might appear. Most Arab leaders use the Palestinian cause as a screen behind which to pursue their real aspirations. Not only does this apply to Pan-Arab, Jordanian, and Syrian leaders, but to some extent it even holds for PLO chieftains; they have often been accused, not without reason, of preferring the high life over concrete achievements. According to a Jordanian official, for example, "The PLO isn't a revolution. It's a corporation. After all these years, the paychecks keep coming and life is good. The PLO cares more about preserving its privilege than helping ordinary Palestinians."

This raises the matter of ultimate Arab intentions. The plain fact is that, on the whole, the

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Arab claimants to Palestine are not eager for the Arab-Israeli conflict to end quickly; each would rather see Israel than one of its rivals occupying the West Bank and Gaza. Israeli control keeps alive the possibility of winning these territories, whereas rule by an Arab government would close the issue. As Ho Chi Minh observed in a related situation, "It is better to sniff the dung of France for a while than to eat China's all our lives." Better, then, for the contest to go on: should one Arab claimant come to possess Palestine, three others would lose. At that point, the benefits of conflict —a means to mobilize populations, make demands on other Arab states, and play a world role— would be forfeited.

The rivalry fuels the conflict, the conflict provides a cover for the rivalry. The confrontation with Israel thus continues even despite the attempt of several Arab parties to end it by accommodating Israel's existence. Indeed, the sheer quantity of the participants acts to prolong the conflict and prohibits a lasting peace. (In this respect the conflict fits a recognized pattern. In Europe, too, as Geoffrey Blainey has shown, wars involving greater numbers of powers have historically lasted longer than those among only two or three nations.) The Arab nationalist claim weakened after 1967, only to have its mantle passed to the Palestinian separatists. Egypt pulled out in the 1970's, but its place was filled by Syria. Fundamentalist Muslims and West Bankers wait in the wings. When Arafat moves toward a political resolution, other Palestinian groups fill the void, and the level of violence does not diminish.

Resolution awaits a whittling-down of Arab positions. Although there is no prospect of this occurring soon, any reduction in the multiplicity of Arab claims to Palestine could signal a beginning of the end of the conflict with Israel. Needless to say, a solution would be much closer if Jordan or the West Bankers inherited the claim, and much further should it be the fundamentalists, the PLO, or the Syrian government.

THE protracted inter-Arab struggle has momentous policy implications for non-Arab actors. For Israel, it questions the desirability of the traditional effort to promote discord among the Arabs. While tactically useful in the short term, this has the effect of preventing movement toward a resolution of the problem. It might usefully be replaced with an approach that reduces the number of Arab claimants by favoring moderate Arabs (Jordan and the residents of the West Bank) over extremists (the PLO, the Pan-Arabists, Syria, and the fundamentalists).

Those outside the Middle East who want to help resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict—especially Americans, but also Europeans and other interested parties—must similarly pay proper regard to the inter-Arab struggle. This points to a reversal of conventional thinking, focusing first on Arab-Arab relations and only then on Arab-Israeli relations. Resolution or diminution of the inter-Arab dispute is a necessary precondition to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict; to reverse the order is to begin with the end of the process.

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Can the Sandinistas Still Be Stopped?

George Russell

Seen from the viewpoint of Nicaragua's ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), the war against U.S. "imperialism" is not going badly at all these days. It seems almost strange to recall, in the midst of the various investigations now in process, that current congressional policy still officially favors the anti-Sandinista forces. But the likelihood that Congress will provide further funds for the so-called *contra* war—actually, a protracted civil war in which both sides are heavily dependent on outside assistance—is rapidly approaching zero. More importantly, the cut-off of such funding—this time, anyway—would signal the likely end to political support for the peasant, worker, middle-class, Indian, and religious forces that have taken up arms against the Sandinistas.

If the cut-off of outside support for the anti-Sandinista forces threatens the collapse of their ability to wage war, it is even more true that the cut-off of outside support for the Sandinistas would mean the collapse of their regime. On a daily basis, the Nicaraguan people show every sign of being sick of the coercion, corruption, scarcity, and selective persecution that now afflict their country—every bit as sick of it all as they were of the preceding forty-seven-year Somoza family dictatorship. Indeed, to judge by the support that has swarmed to the anti-Sandinista rebels, Nicaragua is much more revolted by the Sandinistas than by their predecessors. But the idea enshrined in numerous peace plans for the region that Cuba, the Soviet Union, and the remainder of the Eastern bloc will give up supporting the Sandinistas is little more than a pious wish.

On the contrary, Soviet military support for the Sandinistas has been mounting in boldness, along with that from Cuba *et al.* What is striking about these efforts is their increasing overtness; they are becoming tacitly legitimized. The political right of such forces to be in Nicaragua, in other words, is more and more accepted. Meanwhile, the web of military, economic, political, and cultural agreements lashing Nicaragua to the mast of the Communist world grows steadily in density. As one example, discussions have taken place more or less openly about the advisability of upgrading Nicaragua's status with COMECON, the Communist economic bloc, from observer to member.

Given these levels of external support (including help from some West European governments and private American citizens), Sandinista internal hegemony looks pretty solid, at least for the moment. Massive, forced relocations of peasants have created free-fire zones in the countryside for the Sandinista armed forces—and their Soviet Mi-24 helicopters—without much hue and cry from international human-rights organizations (although the same type of activity by the government in El Salvador has been exhaustively protested). Strategic hamlets manned by local militia have been established, in remarkable homage to U.S. defensive strategy in Vietnam. Thousands of willing so-called Sandalistas—U.S., Canadian, and West European successors to the Venceremos brigades that cut sugar cane in Cuba twenty-odd years ago—have swarmed into contested rural zones.

The Sandalistas have a dual place in the Sandinista order of things. One of their jobs is to contribute to local development projects in lieu of the resources that the regime is devoting to military purposes. The other, unmentioned, job is to get shot at by anti-Sandinista forces from time to time as a further means of undercutting support for the regime's foes. Guerrillas themselves for decades, the Sandinistas are perfectly familiar with Mao's dictum that the people are to guerrillas as the sea is to fish. To anyone who is not a guerrilla, the uncomfortable significance of that maxim is that revolutionaries consider sea water to be more plentiful and disposable than fish.

In Nicaragua's cities, especially Managua, Sandinista security is basically unchallenged. Those faithful instruments of public safety, the Sandinista-controlled neighborhood defense committees, by and large see to that. The regime now operates from behind a dissembling framework of electoral legitimacy that was contested by American and West European observers, but not contested enough: President Ortega is President Ortega is President Ortega. A National Assembly along Cuban lines debates niceties determined by a

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Sandinista Speaker who just happens to be a member of the National Directorate. Nicaragua's old-line, Soviet-leaning Marxist-Leninist party (known as the Nicaraguan Socialist party or PSN) is presented to the world as a case study in Nicaraguan political pluralism, even though in private top Sandinista officials have held discussions with the PSN about merging into a single Communist party. On global issues there are essentially no differences between the two organizations: *vide* Sandinista vocal support for the United Nations' Zionism-is-racism resolution, and abstention from the UN vote condemning the invasion of Afghanistan. The Sandinistas began, after all, as the older party's youth wing, advocating essentially a Guevarist strategy for armed Communist takeover.

Meanwhile, in a process unremarked on at most North American university campuses, the gutting of the remaining non-military opposition in Nicaragua continues. And the most important coercive tool in the hands of the Sandinistas continues to be wielded overtly, in what most North Americans apparently feel is innocuous fashion. That tool is, and always has been, the centralized economic planning mechanism of the state, which the Sandinistas have always viewed in orthodox Leninist fashion as the civil expression of the strategic aims of the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

Through the selective use of agricultural price controls and expropriation policies, for example, the Sandinistas have waged economic war against huge sectors of the rural population—thus in no small measure unintentionally feeding the insurrection of the anti-Sandinista rebels. In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas are fully aware, price controls are an important means of class warfare. Petty commodity producers still exist, and even thrive, in the atmosphere of shortages created by Sandinista economics, but the paramount fact is that such activity is illegal: the force of the state can be used against it whenever the state chooses.

IN THE regional theater of warfare, things may also be looking up for the Sandinistas. The Marxist-Leninist guerrilla movement in El Salvador, known formally as the Faribundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), whose leaders camp out in Nicaragua when not en route to Havana and elsewhere, is showing a resurgence of strength. The government of President José Napoleon Duarte is suffering from what all democratic governments endure with the passage of time, a measured erosion of popularity —except that in El Salvador, such an erosion is more hazardous than elsewhere. The Salvadoran economy is defunct, and the guerrillas intend to keep it that way. The country's extreme right wing is becoming more restless; on the other hand, as the next U.S. presidential election approaches, the Salvadoran guerrillas can probably be expected to try a repeat of their disastrous 1980 bid to seize power by force of arms. This time, the possibility exists that such an assault would try to present Ronald Reagan's successor—less popular, perhaps, with the American people, less hard-line in his anti-Communist views—with another *fait accompli*. Whatever happens, the bloodshed appears bound to get worse.

The Sandinistas, who fully back and abet their fellow Marxist-Leninists of the FMLN, do not find that prospect uncomfortable. In their own view, the only grave danger they face currently is direct U.S. military intervention. On the one hand, all Sandinista efforts seem bent on preventing intervention from occurring. Yet on the other hand, all Sandinista military thinking—and in a fundamental sense, there is no other kind—anticipates, strategizes, and organizes in anticipation of that confrontation.

Why so? For one thing, Sandinista thinking ordains it. Lenin danced for joy on the day that the Bolshevik government outlasted the Paris Commune; for him, the notion that world capitalism would allow a Communist government to survive had been well-nigh unthinkable. In this as in almost every other respect, Lenin was mightily influenced by the Prussian strategic thinker Carl von Clausewitz. For Clausewitz, warfare was profoundly political. Politics determines the depth and amplitude of the mobilization of resources for war. It also determines the aims: war, as he famously said, is the "continuation of politics by other means." For Marxist-Leninists, politics is profoundly warlike: the existence of fundamentally antagonistic social classes linked in international relationships sets no limits of any kind on the means the proletariat and its "vanguard" may employ to achieve their political objectives. Hobbes, in *Leviathan*, proposed to end civil war; Lenin counted on and sought to organize it.

To say that the Sandinistas are devoted Marxist-Leninists is merely to give them their due. The appellation is one that they have loudly insisted upon. As Nicaragua's Vice President, Sergio Ramírez, has put it: "We are perfectly clear in our minds about which currents of thought have moved history, and are committed to them."

Those currents of history are outlined exhaustively, not to say turgidly, in a document known as the *General Political-Military Platform of the FSLN*, first published in 1977. Its principal author is believed to be the estimable Humberto Ortega, currently head of the Sandinista army and brother of the President, Daniel Ortega. It is no small coincidence that Humberto occupies the same relation to his sibling that Fidel Castro's brother, Raul, occupies as head of the Cuban army. Among other things, the *General Political-Military Platform* declares:

> With the development of the Popular Sandinista Revolution, with the triumph over the dictatorship and the establishment of a revo-

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lutionary popular-democratic government, our present Marxist-Leninist vanguard organization will be able to develop to the maximum its organic structure until it becomes an iron-hard Leninist party, created and strengthened by the process itself and with the capacity for developing to the maximum the organization and mobilization of the masses. . . . The FSLN, the vanguard, should be the political and military General Staff of a militant people.

Not much doubt there, one would think, about where anybody stands in the Sandinista ranks. If there were, the *Platform* goes on to dispel it by affiliating itself with the "glorious October Revolution in Russia," along with strands of Nicaraguan nationalism, invariably anti-Yankee, dating back to 1856.

NOR is there much doubt about long-term Sandinista aims. Ever since taking power in June 1979, the FSLN has been concerned not with political survival *per se*, but with the organization of the military stage known as the strategic offensive, the continuation on an international scale of the insurrectionary strategy the Sandinistas pioneered—well, actually, Fidel Castro pioneered it—on the way to victory in Managua. Like Clausewitz and Lenin, the Sandinistas conceive this strategic stage in both military and political terms. Here is how it was articulated at a secret conclave of Sandinista cadres in Managua, three months after the revolutionary triumph:

> The goal of the FSLN's foreign policy is to consolidate the Nicaraguan revolution, because this will help to strengthen the Central American, Latin American, and worldwide revolution.

Vice President Ramírez, one of whose chief responsibilities is to speak for the Sandinistas in a voice that Western liberals, social democrats, and even some conservatives can find acceptable, put it this way in a 1980 interview:

> It must be admitted that deeper social change cannot take place in one country without a similar transformation in those that surround it. To be specific, a process of change in one Central American country requires that a similar process be in progress in the others. . . . We look upon [the Americas] as a totality of which we are still-scattered segments, but the first segments we must try to unify are those that compose Central America.

The Sandinistas' position on the rest of Central America is perhaps revealing of some of the reasons behind their silence on Afghanistan. And at the same time, Ramírez puts the Sandinistas within the context of another grand idea, that of a unified Central American republic, which flickered briefly in and out of existence in the early 19th century. The Sandinistas are Clausewitzian in more ways than one. Their Pan-Latin model of revolution is explicitly interventionist and imperialistic along the lines of 19th-century Prussian nationalism, as updated by 20th-century Vietnam.

Thus, the first major Sandinista political program declared in the pages of Cuba's *Tricontinental* revolutionary journal in 1969: "The people's Sandinist revolution will struggle for the true union of the Central American peoples within one country." Similarly, among the documents captured from Salvadoran guerrillas in late 1983 was a memorandum of a secret meeting between members of the FMLN and officials of the Sandinistas' Department of International Relations (DRI), which is less a government body than the covert, guerrilla-sponsoring arm of the Marxist-Leninist party. There the Sandinistas are quoted as assuring the Salvadoran guerrillas: "You can count on us for assistance. We have always been inextricably linked."

THESE and many other revealing insights are contained in *The Central American Crisis Reader*,* one of a spate of valuable and less valuable books on the region currently crowding onto the literary market. The *Crisis Reader* is among the more valuable ones. Its editors, Robert S. Leiken and Barry Rubin, are both high-profile scholars. Leiken was until recently a Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and an expert on Soviet aims and policy in Latin America, while Rubin is a fellow of the Washington-based Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and a chronicler of the Byzantine bureaucratic process of shaping U.S. foreign policy.

Leiken in particular is also a hardened veteran of the Central America policy wars. He has long been a behind-the-scenes adviser to, and sympathizer with, the social-democratic faction of anti-Sandinista rebels headed by Edén Pastóra (formerly the Sandinistas' famous Comandante Zero) and, on the civilian side, by the Nicaraguan banker and former governing junta member Arturo Cruz, who recently bolted from the main ranks of the anti-Sandinista military coalition. Leiken has also been associated for years with the notion of a symmetrical political solution to the civil wars in Nicaragua and El Salvador: roughly speaking, that in both countries negotiations should aim at reincorporating Communist and anti-Communist rebels into the normal political process. In El Salvador, as this volume shows, Leiken has had interesting contacts with the faction of the five-group Faribundo Martí Front known as the Armed Forces of National Resistance, or FARN, which he considers to be saliently nationalistic, i.e., anti-Cuban and not pro-Soviet, and therefore worthy of courting.

* Edited by Robert S. Leiken and Barry Rubin, Summit Books, 718 pp., $12.95 (paper).

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The *Crisis Reader* provides a gamut of information on Central America, ranging from meditations by *conquistadores* on the original Indian populations of Nicaragua, to *gringo* disquisitions on the reasons why Yankee freebooters taking over the government of Nicaragua, as they did in 1856, might not be such a bad thing, to Sandinista and Salvadoran guerrilla perspectives on their political and military situations.

Of particular interest is a so-called "Last Testament" by Carlos Fonseca, founder of the Sandinistas, written just before his death in 1976. In a stolid, menacing style that recalls Fonseca's formative experience as a young Nicaraguan Communist in Moscow, the document inveighs against the treacheries of other members of the "iron-hard" National Directorate as currently constituted, notably including some double-dealing by Humberto Ortega. Fonseca, now Nicaragua's martyred Lenin, was, along with current Interior Minister Tomás Borge, murderously opposed to the strategy of the Ortega brothers that eventually became the FSLN's *General Political-Military Platform*. Fonseca was eventually gunned down in the Nicaraguan mountains by the Somoza National Guard; one story, not included in the *Crisis Reader*, has it that the Ortegas themselves may have tipped off the Guard to his whereabouts. The book features similar tales of double-dealing and fratricide concerning the *compañeros* of the Salvadoran guerrilla movement, including excerpts from a masterly essay by the Mexican writer Gabriel Zaid on how the movement constitutes a form of sinister upward mobility for the rebels, conducted upon the suffering of the masses.

Like all such anthologies, this one betrays the tastes and opinions of its editors. Thus, on the issue of Salvadoran elections, which have to date roundly endorsed both the democratic process and the Duarte government, the *Crisis Reader* includes the dismissive judgment of the leftist British peer, Lord Chitnis, that the country's 1982 constituent elections were "so fundamentally flawed as to be invalid." A major piece of reasoning in Chitnis's assessment was that no party contesting the elections at the time supported a negotiated settlement with the guerrillas, a position favored both by the Salvadoran rebels and by Leiken. As it happens, two years later a democratically elected President Duarte held out that prospect to the guerrillas, and so far, nothing has come of it.

For all its many virtues—and they are very considerable, both in presenting previously unpublished guerrilla documents and in giving voice to intelligent, concerned Central Americans as they contemplate their plight—the *Crisis Reader* suffers from two flaws, unfortunately all too common in the thick soup of analytic prose now being ladled out on Central America. One of them is the common belief, to which Leiken and Rubin, alas, sometimes subscribe, that democratic political ideas and institutions apparently have no intrinsic value to the people of Central America themselves. What looms much larger in almost every analysis, including that of the *Crisis Reader*, are the huge income and landholding disparities of these tiny, turbulent republics. Those disparities are seen, in turn, as the dialectical basis for justifying armed revolution.

This tendency, particularly by U.S. partisans, has led to the systematic disparagement of authentic democrats in Central America. Time and again, the tremendous domestic support enjoyed, for example, by El Salvador's Duarte has been discounted in the U.S., and the electoral process denigrated, until incredibly brave Salvadoran voters and office-seekers have proved the skeptics wrong.

On the other hand—and here we come to the second common flaw—the emphasis on economics has been used to obscure the pro-Soviet and Cuban lineage of most of the Central American guerrilla movements. As Pablo Antonio Cuadra, an eminent Nicaraguan historian and literary editor of the now-suppressed daily *La Prensa*, notes in the *Crisis Reader*, "at least in the prerevolutionary period we knew what it meant to surrender our sovereignty: now, however, we are not even permitted to call things by their proper name."

If the *Crisis Reader* is an intelligent and carefully edited effort to educate, say, college sophomores and congressional staff aides on the complexities of the Central American crisis, *Conflict in Nicaragua** offers a more sophisticated and elaborate—and therefore, in places, even drier—effort at understanding. The book is the product of a three-day seminar held in London in April 1986 under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Institute of Soviet and East European Studies at the Universiy of Miami. The aim was to provide a wide range of differing points of view on Nicaragua, although only one Sandinista representative took part in the symposium. One sign of the seriousness of the *Conflict* effort is that the volume contains, in its turgid entirety, the text of the Sandinista *Political-Military Platform*; Leiken and Rubin present it in highly abridged form. Clearly, *Conflict* is intended for serious students of Nicaragua with a high tolerance for bureaucratic prose.

This book is also a harder-nosed assessment of the Nicaraguan condition under the Sandinistas. The distinguished Sovietologist Jiri Valenta, co-editor of the volume, with his wife Virginia describes the Leninist evolution of the Sandinistas in forthright terms. The Valentas also provide a

* Edited by Jiri Valenta and Esperanza Durán, Allen & Unwin, 441 pp., $45.00.

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much-needed morphology of the Sandinista National Directorate, which has mutated from a nine-member conclave of *comandantes* into a multidepartmental bureaucracy reminiscent of Soviet and Cuban politburo models. There *is* pluralism of a sort within the Directorate; at various times before their victory, the three major factions of the Sandinistas took turns at expelling one another, sometimes with accompanying death sentences. Now the nine directors tend to balance one another in watchful triads on sensitive executive bodies. (Since *Conflict* went to press, however, this situation may be changing, with the Ortega faction gaining strength and the so-called Proletarian Tendency, most prominently represented by the now-demoted Agriculture Minister, Jaime Wheelock, on the wane.)

The Valentas methodically document the influence of Soviet and Cuban mentors on the security apparatus, and describe the use of "salami tactics"—the whittling away of opposition positions—on such bodies as the former junta of the Government of National Reconstruction (which imploded into the Ortega Presidency in 1985) and the Cuban-style Council of State. At every stage, the Sandinistas have carefully tried to preserve at least totemic or symbolic "bourgeois" support. When all else fails, there is coercion, either through the security apparatus or the "divine mobs" controlled by Interior Minister Borge, the glib and voluble revolutionary most often pointed out as the "hard-line" alternative to the "moderate" Ortega brothers. The Valentas also outline in exhaustive and sobering detail the expanding network of trade relations, training programs, and commissions of cultural and political cooperation that tie Nicaragua to the Communist bloc.

The Valentas' conclusion is that although Nicaragua "has not yet evolved into a full-fledged Leninist state comparable to the countries of Eastern Europe, to Cuba, or to Vietnam," nevertheless the FSLN "seems headed toward becoming a dictatorship of a Leninist-oriented party."

How has that process been obscured? In the opinion of Arturo Cruz, Jr., son of the former Nicaraguan junta member, the answer lies in part in Sandinista manipulation of the Socialist International and other fonts of partisan opinion. Cruz argues that "as long as the Sandinistas are able to give the appearance of being a Central American David facing a North American Goliath, they can afford to be oppressors at home and heroes abroad."

Conflict also gives the Sandinistas their say, or as much as they cared to have. Their demonological perspective on Central American history is provided by Francisco Lopez, director of a Sandinista think tank in Managua. Lopez appears to be a practitioner of the kind of phenomenology popular in various anti-American policy circles, whereby any act by a U.S. citizen in Latin America becomes the collective responsibility of the American people, known in shorthand as the CIA. Thus, Lopez hauls out the long-smoldering bones of William Walker, the American freebooter who briefly controlled Nicaragua in 1856—Sandinista historiography does not play up the fact that Walker accomplished this with a grand total of ten men—reestablished slavery, and was then dislodged with help from an embarrassed Washington and subsequently executed. In the Sandinista view, Walker is to U.S. imperialism what John the Baptist is to Christianity: he pointed the way. And as he went, so will go all subsequent U.S. adventures in the region.

The important thing about the Sandinista view of Nicaraguan history is that it puts their country at the center of the world-historical stage, while simultaneously absolving its residents of any responsibility for Nicaragua's historical development. This makes for some interesting conceptual leaps. Lopez cites the ubiquitous Sergio Ramírez, this time in his role as editor of a book on the eponymous Augusto César Sandino, thusly:

> When the Commune of Paris was defeated in 1870, world capitalism made a new push, which included more than ever before marginal countries, like Central America [*sic*], in the continuous production of raw materials for metropolitan industry.

This may be the first-ever discovery of the link between the defeat of the Paris Commune and the commercialization of the banana.

The millenarian sense of self which this passage evokes is one reason why the Sandinistas have proved so difficult to deal with, particularly when it comes to curtailing their international revolutionary activities. The irony is that if it were not for the Sandinistas' own insistence on forging East-West links and undermining neighboring governments in the area, U.S. interest in Central America would probably be continuing the long decline epitomized by the give-back of the Panama Canal.

What should the U.S. be doing about the growing swamp that Nicaraguan obduracy has created? *Conflict* provides no easy answers and, indeed, suffers from a debilitating abstractness when it gets down to hard cases. "The United States should seek to change the existing perceptions not only of many Nicaraguans but also of other Central Americans about the lack of continuity in U.S. policy toward Central America," the editors say. That includes consistent support for the anti-Sandinista forces. Well, to be sure, but at the moment it is not easy to see how. The editors also argue that "Above all, the U.S. government should insist on the elimination of Soviet-Nicaraguan security ties, even if this were to mean a U.S. acceptance of Nicaragua's internal order." But that would be something of a betrayal of the anti-Sandinista forces.

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Finally, the editors recommend that if Nicaragua should refuse a deal, the U.S. should resort to unilateral measures like a naval blockade. But *that* would in turn imply a departure from the multilateral negotiating framework, including the Contadora negotiating process which all sides, including the U.S., claim to support (even though it has done no appreciable good so far).

In short, the editors see a resolution to the current impasse arising only from an even graver crisis of the same kind. And even then, *Conflict*'s editors are not optimistic. They end their ruminations with a slogan from the Sandinista youth movement: "To learn from the Soviet Union is to learn how to conquer. To learn from the United States is to learn how to retreat."

THAT slogan, according to Lars Schoultz, the slightly less than fully articulate author of *National Security and United States Policy Toward Latin America*,* may be fine. It is, after all, only a perception, and Schoultz, a political-science professor at the University of North Carolina, is, like many of his academic colleagues, one who believes that U.S. policy toward Latin America can best be divined through the discipline of cognitive psychology. As Schoultz puts it in explaining his enterprise, "What is preceived depends upon the perceptual apparatus, particularly the belief system, of the perceiver." It is all in the mind, so to speak.

Or at least it is all in *someone's* mind. In as close to plain English as he ever comes in this strange work, Schoultz puts forward the argument that "U.S. policy toward Latin America is largely determined by the manner in which one fact, instability, is simplified when it is perceived by U.S. policy-makers; this simplification, in turn, is governed by a series of beliefs about the causes of instability and its consequences for U.S. security." Schoultz never really defines the term "instability" (at one point he indicates that it is associated with societal violence), but anyway that is not what his book is about. By and large, it is a convoluted attempt to argue the case for complete U.S. passivity.

How Schoultz arrives at this pass is perhaps the most interesting aspect of his enterprise. He claims to have built his picture of the ways in which U.S. policy-makers view the world through more than 200 interviews with such worthies. But it is never quite clear who Schoultz feels is a policy-maker. Sometimes he attributes opinions to anonymous State Department officials, or unnamed military officers at the Pentagon, or in Honduras. Sometimes the policy-makers include legislators such as Senators Edward Kennedy and Christopher Dodd, or Representative Gerry Studds of Massachusetts. They also include a "relatively large number of [congressional] staffers, some of whom occupy important positions in the policy-making process." They are assuredly a variegated lot: in a single sentence, Schoultz strings together a retired U.S. Army colonel speaking in 1980; a senior State Department official speaking in 1982; a variety of conservative academics writing in the *Washington Quarterly* in 1980; and an Assistant Secretary of State speaking in 1984.

At one point, while diagramming the beliefs—more accurately, the alleged beliefs—of "liberal and moderate" policy-makers concerning poverty as a cause of instability, Schoultz asks a not unreasonable question:

> How . . . is it possible to assert that [a diagram] exists in the minds of U.S. policy-makers if, for whatever reason, the officials themselves do not express the beliefs? The answer—and here is a warning—is that [the diagram] is a product of inference. I sat down with the interview responses and other data from the group of policy-makers . . . and I pieced together a modal set of responses.

Another way to put that is to say that Schoultz made it up.

What are the policy responses that Schoultz is massaging in such *outré* fashion? He asserts that U.S. policy in Latin America has gone through a number of stages of simple binary fission. The first stage was one of cold-war consensus: instability (whatever it is) was the outgrowth of Communism. Then came an era in which policy-makers split on the issue of first causes: Communism or poverty? In Schoultz's view, this produced an interesting situation in the Kennedy era, in which "one group of officials wanted to shoot the individuals responsible for instability because they were Communists; the other group wanted to provide these Latin Americans with a Food for Peace shipment." Then, Schoultz avers, came a second mutation, roughly corresponding to the Carter era. A new rupture occurred, between policy-makers "who believe instability is a threat to U.S. security [and] those who believe it is not." The latter group, Schoultz asserts, is often associated with the notion of "reform-motivated instability," meaning "no broken eggs, no omelettes." (Sadly, Schoultz does not give Lenin the credit that is his due for this last formulation.)

Finally, Schoultz arrives at the nub of his neutralist argument. In brisk order he asserts that U.S. concern about Latin America is primarily psychological, a function of geographical proximity that no longer has any meaning in the age of ballistic missiles. Latin America has little strategic significance, he says, and anyway, Latin American countries have never been very good U.S. allies. Soviet submarine bases in the Caribbean, like the one in Cuba, Schoultz states, would be no threat to the U.S., since long-range Soviet missile submarines based in the Soviet Arctic can destroy American targets just as easily.

Schoultz seems to have an answer for every-

* Princeton University Press, 365 pp., $42.50.

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thing except why, under the circumstances, the Soviets themselves find it worthwhile to send military advisers to Central America, help to build airfields capable of handling long-range interceptors and medium-range bombers, or establish submarine and other naval facilities. What Schoultz is trying to ignore is the utility of the projection of power itself. It is harmless if the Soviet Union does it, and counterproductive if the U.S. does it: under those circumstances, it is unsurprising that Schoultz feels that what defines Latin American radicals is not their commitment to the East but their "commitment to independence."

WHY are Schoultz's views worth taking seriously at all, in view of the massive evidence that refutes them? For one thing because, as he himself asserts, other putative policy-makers feel the same way he does. And in fact, a more sophisticated version of many of the same views has been published almost simultaneously with his book. It is called *Partners in Conflict* and is by Abraham F. Lowenthal,* a professor of Latin American studies at the University of Southern California. Lowenthal has also been closely associated with the Inter-American dialogue, a private U.S.-Latin American group that serves as a forum and lobby on Latin American issues and which is headed by former U.S. Ambassador Sol M. Linowitz, chief negotiator of the Panama Canal treaties.

As Lowenthal and Linowitz have done before, *Partners in Conflict* blames the U.S. for exercising what is usually called the "hegemonic presumption—the belief that Latin America is a rightful sphere of U.S. influence." Lowenthal hauls out the usual litany of U.S. sins: meddling in Salvador Allende's Chile; enthusiasm for the 1964 military coup in Brazil; the 1965 intervention in Santo Domingo (which, though Lowenthal does not stress it, has given that country more than twenty years of effective democracy). Then he points to a number of milestones indicating a decline in U.S. hemispheric power: our failure to organize a multilateral peacekeeping force to forestall the Sandinista takeover in Nicaragua; the refusal of fifteen Latin American nations to join the 1980 Olympics boycott in Moscow; Ronald Reagan's inability to prevent the Argentine invasion of the Falkland/Malvinas islands and Alexander Haig's humbling failure to rearrange a subsequent mediation.

Lowenthal's list stops short before Grenada. Still, it is true enough, as he states, that "the decline of U.S. preponderance in the Western Hemisphere has been pervasive and fundamental." Lowenthal hails that fact, and also pats the Carter administration on the back for its early attempts to go along with the trend (as on the Panama Canal). He also thinks that Carter's proclaimed tolerance for "ideological pluralism" in the region was a sign of U.S. maturity. By contrast, Lowenthal is harshly critical of the Reagan administration's harder line, particularly in Central America. And he goes after former U.S. Ambassador to the UN Jeane Kirkpatrick who in her seminal article, "Dictatorships and Double Standards" (COMMENTARY, November 1979), castigated the Carterites for undercutting friendly autocratic regimes in Iran and Nicaragua. Says Lowenthal: "If the United States is to protect its interests in the Western Hemisphere on an enduring basis, it must accept the end of U.S. hegemony. The United States must move from a stance of dominance to one of cooperation."

Unfortunately, Lowenthal's arguments are filled with the kind of false dichotomies that are designed to fuel partisan debates in advance of U.S. presidential-election campaigns. Lowenthal's general observations are, by and large, restatements of positions held by the left wing of the Democratic party during the Carter years. He drastically oversimplifies the Latin American policies of the Reagan administration which, after a bumbling start, staggered back toward the center line of traditional U.S. initiatives in the region. The dramatic exception has been policy toward Nicaragua, but the evidence is plentiful that the Carter administration's pacific, even appeasing, approach to the Sandinistas did not work, and that the policy was already being jettisoned before Ronald Reagan took office.

Another false dichotomy is Lowenthal's assertion that the U.S. should shrug off its "traditional" security concerns by taking the high road on issues of Latin American trade and development, debt management, the battle against protectionism, and other ills. The U.S. under Reagan is doing, and has done, all of these things: less than some critics would like, and more than others desire. There will always be room to battle over the exact blend. But by trying to argue such an abstract definition of U.S. interests in Latin America to the exclusion of real security concerns, Lowenthal brings the debate back to Clausewitz, and one of his most elegantly concise axioms: war, as he put it, is a "trial of moral and physical force by means of the latter." And not, as Lowenthal would have it, by means of the former.

Nowhere is the paradoxical quality of Lowenthal's line of reasoning better highlighted than in the area of human rights. The map of Latin America has drastically changed since the end of the 1970's. The authoritarian regimes that dotted the map at that time have been replaced by (often shaky) civilian governments. Significantly, two of the major transformations, in Brazil and Argentina, owe little or nothing to U.S. influence. Elsewhere in the hemisphere, the distinction between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes that Jeane Kirkpatrick made famous proved to be generally valid. With the exceptions of Chile and Paraguay,

* Johns Hopkins University Press, 235 pp., $19.95.

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the authoritarians have gone to ground. In Cuba, meanwhile, Stalinism of the economy is more in vogue than it is in Mikhail Gorbachev's USSR.

Still another major problem with Lowenthal's book is that it assumes, as most Latin American national lobbies try to do, that any important changes that are needed in U.S.-Latin relations must come from the U.S. side. The Reagan administration seems as well aware as any other in modern U.S. history that unilateral American power in the hemisphere is declining: that, after all, is what development policy is all about. Beyond Central America, and the Caribbean, cooperation, suasion, and hard-nosed bargaining are already the main U.S. instruments for seeking to further its interests. Unless cooperation means capitulating to Latin concerns, U.S. hegemonism, so-called, already does not exist. Even in Central America, the ultimate security question may well prove to be what the Latin American nations themselves are willing to do to preserve their own security interests.

In that regard, a word needs to be said about Mexican foreign policy. An often overlooked detail is that Mexican aspirations for hegemony in Central America run deep. In some Central American national circles, Mexico is about as popular as Turkey was once in the Balkans. The ways of those hegemonic aspirations are often convoluted: it is an interesting fact that one of the nine Sandinista *comandantes,* Victor Tirado, is a "naturalized" Nicaraguan, formerly a Mexican, and a former member of that country's Moscow-line Communist party.

A FINAL Clausewitzian dictum of which Nicaragua's Sandinista rulers are fully aware is that the absence of war is not peace. As the Prussian strategist acridly observed, aggressors are the most peaceful people in the world: their desire is to take over your territory without firing a shot. Or with as few shots as possible.

John Norton Moore, director of the Center of Law and National Security at the University of Virginia School of Law, has now published a trenchant monograph* on the use by Nicaragua of "revolutionary internationalism" as a means to subvert the prohibitions of the UN Charter against aggression, as well as of the Charter's assertion that necessary and proportional force may be used to repel aggressive acts. Norton knows a lot about the topic: he helped to defend the Reagan administration against Nicaragua's 1984 charge in the World Court that the mining of that country's Pacific harbors by CIA-directed "assets" was an act of aggression. The U.S. suffered a major public-relations defeat when it suddenly withdrew recognition of the Court's right to rule on the case. The dispute went forward anyway; in 1986 the U.S. lost the case.

In Moore's view, the U.S. lost a battle it should have won. More importantly, the West in general lost an interpretation of the United Nations Charter, and of the Western Hemisphere's Rio Treaty of collective self-defense, that specifically covers indirect aggression of the "revolutionary internationalist" type. In his closely argued monograph, Moore asserts that "the insulation of attacking states from defensive response in such settings would be a formula for destruction of the [UN] Charter." The right of proportional response against such aggressions, he maintains, include the right to launch covert actions against the aggressor. Among other examples he cites the case of Lawrence of Arabia, who in World War I created an insurgency inside the Ottoman empire as part of the Allies' response to aggression by the Central Powers.

Moore's main point is that the recent Hague contest was not a legal battle but a propaganda war. On the legal issue, the system of world order summed up in the Charter of the UN and the Organization of American States requires a revindication of the full right of nation-states to respond to covert attack, be it secret guerrilla war, terrorist attack, or externally sponsored insurgency. As he puts it, "world order—and the Charter system—is not an equilibrium mechanism like global climate. It can be preserved only if governments and international institutions, and the men and women behind them, have the vision to understand its importance and the courage and tenacity to fight for its survival."

That theme is taken up vigorously in *Central America and the Reagan Doctrine,*† a series of meditations on covert force and counterforce that originally appeared as articles in *Strategic Review,* the quarterly journal of the Washington-based United States Strategic Institute. In a foreword to this collective effort, Jeane Kirkpatrick draws a distinction between the democratic revolution personified by El Salvador's President José Napoleon Duarte and the Marxist-Leninist methods of his guerrilla opponents and of revolutionary Nicaragua. "What should we, who live on this continent, do in the face of the penetration of the hemisphere by Soviet imperialism?" she asks. The answer, she evidently feels, lies in the Reagan administration's evolving support for pro-democratic resistance movements, including the anti-Sandinista rebels. But public understanding of the Reagan Doctrine, she admits presciently, "is still weak."

An even darker view is presented by Angelo M. Codevilla, a senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution. The Reagan Doctrine, he says, is

> one more species of that present-day American phenomenon: the *declaratory* policy. In normal

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* *The Secret War in Central America: Sandinista Assault on World Order,* University Publications of America, 195 pp., $17.95.

† Edited by Walter F. Hahn, University Press of America, 336 pp., $25.50.

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parlance, policy is the reasonable orchestration of action to achieve certain goals. The qualifier "declaratory" attached to so many U.S. policies, on matters ranging from nuclear targeting to liberation movements, reflects a widespread recognition that they are not policies at all, but rather rhetoric that satisfies some domestic political needs and may contribute to decisions regarding discrete actions in a particular field.

Codevilla thus warns that, particularly as an expression of U.S. national resolve, there may be less to the Reagan Doctrine than meets the eye.

That resolve of *some* kind is necessary is the thesis of *The Bear in the Back Yard* by Timothy Ashby,* a policy analyst for Latin American affairs at Washington's conservative Heritage Foundation. Ashby argues that Soviet adventurism is both cautious and tenacious, but that it can also be reversed in the region if determined action is taken soon.

In Ashby's view, continued support for the anti-Sandinista resistance forces is key. Actually, Ashby goes further: he calls for a generalized insurrection of anti-Sandinista forces along the lines of the 1979 revolt that brought the Sandinistas themselves to power. Ashby states baldly his belief that

> the Sandinista regime can be removed by the force of arms of the Nicaraguan people if given U.S. military assistance. However, if the U.S. Congress is unwilling to commit itself to an unequivocal policy of rendering military and economic assistance to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance forces, direct U.S. military intervention will become inevitable.

ONCE again, Clausewitz: the point of war is always political, to make the enemy obey your will rather than his own. But first, that will must be known. On the Sandinista side, there is more than ample evidence to show that the regime's aims are straightforward, and its strategic purpose clear. On the U.S. side, the picture is a great deal murkier. But there is no reason to think, even though some optimists do, that the challenge does not exist, or that it is about to go away.

It will not go away; which is why in the future, if all other means for blunting the Sandinista enthusiasm for hemispheric revolution are forestalled, Reagan's successor as President—even if he should be a Democrat—may well find it necessary to forge his own military response to the Sandinista pursuit of Leninist "politics by other means."

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* Lexington Books, 240 pp., $22.95.

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Fantasies About South Africa

Peter L. Berger and Bobby Godsell

"THE WEST" has long been an important presence in the politics of South Africa. "South Africa" has now become, at least for a time, a significant political issue in Western democracies. The quotation marks are indicated because this mutual imagery is a tangle of realities and fantasies, the latter often appearing as projections of pathology from a particular Western society to a rather conveniently distant place.

It is hardly necessary at this late stage to elaborate on the pathologies of South African society, based as it is on a racial caste system, apartheid, that is not only morally odious in every way but may also be seen as the major obstacle to economic and social development. What may be less obvious is that it has been enormously convenient for South Africans of all races and ideological persuasions to blame the West in general and the United States in particular for the enraging frustrations of their country. Those in opposition to the regime blame the West for not doing enough to end apartheid; the regime itself, and even more those to the Right of the regime, blame it for destructive meddling in South African affairs; and sundry groups in between blame it for not promoting whatever agenda they deem necessary to save the country. But conversely people in the West too have used South Africa as a ventilation valve for their own moral and political frustrations, finding in it a convenient surrogate or an easy analogy for issues at home whose complexity has rendered them intractable.

The fantasy component in this reciprocal game of projection is massive, as when black resistance groups seem seriously to believe that some simple decisions taken in Washington could blow away the present government; or when many white South Africans think that the West will not and cannot abandon them in a final crunch; and no less so when anti-apartheid activists in the United States and Europe imagine that just a few more pushes from the West will see a liberation army march victoriously into Pretoria.

We will have some observations about a number of these fantasies. But first of all, we would stress that in a situation as full of passion as this one, nothing is more useful than to insist on a full and frank consideration of the *realities*. Indeed, it is precisely because blind passions have so often brought about evils greatly more horrendous than the ones against which outrage was originally directed that true moral responsibility dictates a relentless attention to facts and probabilities. And this is especially so when people in complete or relative safety initiate chains of events in which others are made to pay the costs. What we propose to do here, therefore, is enumerate a number of realities with which, in our opinion, those in the West seeking to help bring about a humane future for South Africa must reckon.

PEOPLE naturally try to understand the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar. Thus many Westerners, perhaps especially in Europe, look at South Africa as a case of tardy decolonization. Many Americans, for their part, perceive the racial conflict in South Africa in terms of their own civil-rights struggle. Both perceptions are dangerously misleading.

South Africa cannot be decolonized because it is not a colony. Its white population, both English- and Afrikaans-speakers, is overwhelmingly *indigenous*. Though as many as half-a-million whites may be eligible to carry British passports, even if all were to leave (representing more than forty years' worth of current annual emigration), some four million whites would be left. For if the ties of English-speaking South Africa to England are tenuous, those of Afrikaners to Holland, France, or Germany are virtually nonexistent. Their name is indeed appropriate. Here is a people, the Afrikaner *volk*, who turned their backs on Europe some two hundred years ago and created a highly distinctive culture different from any other on earth. They cannot "go home"; they *are* home. These are the crucial facts which preclude the decolonization analogy. More importantly, no black resistance group has ever called for whites to leave.

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Not only is South Africa not a "colonial regime"; it is not even a neocolonial one. It is a racially and ethnically heterogeneous country, in many ways a nation-in-the-making rather than a nation, in which since 1948 one ethnic group has exercised a hegemony of power within a grotesque political system which combines a flawed democracy for whites with a sort of racial feudalism for blacks. This is not a nation needing liberation from an alien ruler, but rather a nation yet to be forged. The present conflict is about the shape that this nation will take and about the question of who will have the power to do the shaping.

Nor is South Africa's contemporary conflict a replication of the civil-rights struggle in the United States. First, the numerical relations between whites and blacks are drastically different (in fact more or less reversed). Secondly, the American civil-rights struggle took place within a democratic constitutional framework already firmly in place and under a legitimating body of ideas, the one called the "American creed" by Gunnar Myrdal, which made racial segregation an increasingly obvious political and moral aberration. By contrast, the essence of the present conflict in South Africa is not a struggle for civil rights, but a struggle for power and for nationhood.

Concerning that struggle, perhaps no proposition has been as much taken for granted in recent Western debates as that some sort of racial Armageddon is both inevitable and imminent in South Africa. The title of the influential Rockefeller report, "Time Running Out," captures this sense of foreboding. More recently, similar claims have been made with regard to the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group report. Nor is this so only with external analysts. Thus the foreword to the Buthelezi Commission report notes that it probably presents the last opportunity for peaceful negotiation.

It is not difficult to understand why this proposition of imminent cataclysm has been plausible to so many people. When one looks at a morally untenable social reality, one is tempted to consider it empirically untenable as well. But morally untenable realities, alas, often perdure over long periods of time. Ever since 1917 Russian émigrés have been telling each other that Bolshevism is so horrible that its end must be coming soon. And indeed, according to statements dating back as far as the turn of the century, the South African clock has been stuck for decades at five minutes to midnight.

WHY is the expectation of imminent cataclysm unrealistic? Because neither the overthrow of the present regime through armed struggle nor the perpetuation of black political impotence through armed repression is possible. The first is excluded by the harsh realities of military power, the second by the inescapable interdependencies of industrialization.

The defeat of the present rulers of South Africa would require a military force at least equal in numbers, equipment, and logistical support to that of the South African Defense Force. This means an army of half-a-million men, with appropriate air and naval support. Present estimates put African National Congress (ANC) guerrillas somewhere between 10,000 and 20,000 and those of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) at fewer than 1,000. Most of these guerrillas are based far from South Africa's border, and can only enter the country in small numbers. While capable of spectacular acts of sabotage and terror, such forces pose no serious match for those of the South African regime.

If the resistance movements themselves offer little military challenge to South Africa, the prospect of a Pan-African force, though often the subject of Organization of African Unity discussion, seems remote, even if augmented by Cuban, East German, or other Soviet-allied troops.

One further "military" option demands consideration: the demoralization of the regime by urban terrorism, sabotage, and similar acts of low-scale violence, to the point where the regime "gives up." Most successful revolutions in modern history have followed this pattern, rather than that of outright military victory. However, as Lenin among others well undersood, such a strategy assumes that the armed forces of the regime will at some point either join the revolutionaries or just go home. It is very difficult indeed to imagine either eventuality in the South African context.

In other words, short of massive military intervention by one of the great powers (an absurd hypothesis in the case of the West and an unlikely one in the case of the Soviet bloc), the present South African regime cannot be defeated militarily within the foreseeable future.

The South African government understands this parallelogram of forces very well, and this helps to explain its truculence. Nevertheless, military might alone cannot grant the government the power to avoid radical changes in the present political structure.

To put the case more accurately, the regime could maintain itself, probably for a long time, by brute force alone—but *only* if it were converted into a fully articulated totalitarian system. Such a conversion would demand a heavy price in what most *white* South Africans, including the members and supporters of the present government, want for themselves and their future. These costs would be counted in moral, political, and especially economic terms. South Africa is a very different country from, say, the Soviet Union in the heyday of Stalinist repression. South Africa is highly industrialized, with modern infrastructures which require an at least minimally cooperative

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labor force. The recent confrontations between the management and the labor force of the state-run railways and postal services provide vivid illustrations of the interdependencies created by modernity.

The inescapable conclusion to be drawn from these considerations is that if the country is not to be destroyed, there is no alternative to the forging of a new political system in which all South Africans can participate. What is more, such a system cannot be unilaterally imposed by the present regime "through the barrel of the gun"; it will have to be established through the give and take of negotiations.

But is it already "too late for negotiations" (which is another way the expectation of imminent catastrophe in South Africa is formulated)? On the contrary: it is too early for negotiations. The reason is both depressing and simple. Parties to a dispute begin negotiations when they have concluded that victory on their terms is not possible. The major parties in this particular conflict are the South African regime and the major resistance groupings. Significant elements in each continue to believe that they can "win." The regime continues to believe that it can coercively impose its notions of "reform"; many in the resistance groupings think that determined struggle will lead to the complete collapse of the apartheid regime.

Thus the ANC has pithily summed up its position by saying that the only thing to negotiate is "the modalities of the transfer of power." What this formula seeks is, in essence, unconditional surrender. On the government side, when a senior official was recently asked what the regime intends to do in the wake of Western sanctions, he replied: "Why do you feel we should do anything?"

No doubt more realistic assessments are being made both at ANC headquarters in Zambia and at the South African government offices in Pretoria. But as long as this cocky assurance marks the public postures of major actors in the South Africa drama, negotiations are a long way off.

The fact that neither the regime nor its putatively revolutionary opponents can "win" on their own terms has combined with the fact that conditions are still not ripe for negotiations to create a stalemate that may well persist for some time. It is a very unhappy stalemate, filled with human suffering, deprivation, anger, and death, disproportionately borne by ordinary South Africans, particularly ordinary black South Africans. However, the stalemate has also created the *time* and *space* for second thoughts, new initiatives, compromise solutions. Here again, if advantage is to be taken of those opportunities, an attention to the realities is necessary, beginning with a recognition that neither the regime nor the resistance is as monolithic as many seem to think.

The South African government is often portrayed, both outside and inside the country, as fully united in its determination to hang on to its present political hegemony at any cost. Yet the ruling National party must reckon with all sorts of fissures within even the Afrikaans-speaking population whose support it once took for granted, not to mention its now numerically significant white English support, as well as its putative partners of color. Prominent defections; sharp Afrikaans media criticism; the remarkable revolt of Afrikaner academics (roughly half the senior faculty of Stellenbosch University recently protested against the racial policies of the government); and, probably most important in the long run, the anti-apartheid noises coming out of the Dutch Reformed Church (the *mater et magistra* of the apartheid ideology)—all these are developments that would make it very hard for the regime to follow a defiant "*laager*" strategy.

Similar considerations apply to the resistance. The extent to which the ANC is monolithic continues to be debated (we suspect that the organization in exile is more unitary than many of its well-wishers would like to believe). In any event, resistance to the regime is not confined to the ANC, and is very diverse. Even the United Democratic Front (UDF), often perceived as a sort of "internal ANC," has been aptly described as a coalition of activities, rather than an organization, let alone a monolithic one.

In addition to both the ANC and the UDF there exists a range of Africanist or black-consciousness groups, the most important of which are the Pan-Africanist Congress externally, and Azapo and the organizations affiliated with the National Forum internally. These organizations, though they share the ANC/UDF rejection of apartheid, differ from them on both ideological and tactical grounds—differences which have taken on violent expression in some black townships in recent times.

Inkatha, led by Gatsha Buthelezi, chief of the Zulus, adds another powerful dimension to the spectrum of resistance groupings. While some question its claim to be the largest black-liberation movement in the history of the country, a settlement which did not in some way accommodate this movement is inconceivable.

The "comrades"—those violent youth gangs which have run amok in the black townships in recent years—constitute another shadowy and elusive presence. While their allegiance is most often assumed to be to the ANC, it is doubtful that they are under the effective control of anyone.

A range of community-based groups addressing issues of education, housing, and consumer concerns, and representing a heterogeneous, dynamic, and significantly democratic coalition of interests, also claim independent existence within the resistance spectrum.

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A further powerful factor in that spectrum are the black-oriented labor unions. With more than one million members, these unions, organized into two major and several minor national federations, combine radical rhetoric with a pattern of pragmatic behavior consistent with the role of unions in pluralist democracies.

Finally, there is what some see as the sleeping giant of South African black politics—the indigenous, independent black churches, the largest of which, the Zion Christian Church, has a membership of between four and five million, more than a million of whom assemble annually at the Church's Easter celebrations in Moria, near Pietersburg.

In short, the picture of a monolithic regime, in the form of the present government, pitted against monolithic black interests represented by the ANC, is quite simply false. Policies and actions based on this view of South Africa are unlikely to have the consequences they intend.

So too with policies that have been designed to produce results in too short a time. Strategies for change in South Africa need to be framed in terms of years, perhaps even decades. Undoubtedly this is difficult and frustrating (not least to Americans, with their problem-solving, task-force mentality), but it is necessary if the change desired is to be both an improvement on the present, and enduring over time. What is called for here is the creation of a radically new political system—and, to boot, one that is democratic, and that will promote economic growth, not preside over economic demise. This means a process of establishing new institutions. Anyone who thinks that such a task can be accomplished quickly, or especially in one cathartic act of redemptive violence, has learned nothing from the history of modern revolutions.

Western sanctions provide an appropriate example of the political implications of short-term time frames. The advocates of sanctions argued that they would create mounting economic pressures which in a brief span (within months!) would force the South African government to change its ways for the better. The intention, it was said, was not to destroy the South African economy but to "bring Pretoria to its senses."

Evidence to date indicates the opposite effects: the South African economy is in a state of modest but clear recovery; Pretoria has become more and not less truculent; Western influence over political developments seems reduced rather than enhanced. Thus expectations of the short-run consequences of punitive economic measures seem in the process of being disappointed (a fact that appears to be achieving recognition among some anti-apartheid activists in the West).

On the other hand, it is quite possible that in the long run sanctions will hurt the South African economy. Everything depends on just how long a run one envisages for this damage to come about, and what one believes its political consequences will be. Divergent views exist as to the longer-term consequences of sanctions. Some think that further import-substitution, as well as the indigenization of capital assets, will promote economic growth at higher levels. Others foresee economic distortions, a growth in government regulation, a wasteful allocation of economic resources. But in any event, few can disagree that a situation in which South Africa, as a developing nation, is forced to be a net capital exporter must negatively affect long-tem growth prospects. What will be the political consequences of such retarded growth? Does economic hardship promote moral behavior and political boldness?

There are also moral implications to the choice between a short-term and a long-term time frame. For example, a school boycott was advocated in 1985 and 1986 under the slogan "Liberation now, education later." A plausible slogan—if "liberation" can be expected in the near future. But what if this desired event should tarry for at least a decade? And what would be the consequences for a "liberated" South Africa of a young generation schooled in nothing but street violence? There can be no doubt that it was questions such as these which prompted the large-scale return to school in early 1987. It makes moral sense to have children sacrifice, say, one school year on behalf of a political cause; it is quite another matter to sacrifice the future life chances of an entire generation.

For another example, a stated goal of many resistance groupings has been to make the black townships ungovernable. This has involved conflicts which pit children armed with sticks and gasoline cans against armored vehicles and automatic rifles. Once again, such a strategy might make sense if the time frame were a year or so (and indeed, if victory were in sight); it is a very different calculus if one envisages a decade of such uneven combat.

A second purpose of sanctions is moral suasion —"sending a message" to the South African government. Many who advocate such "message-sending" strategies, however, view the South African government as the moral equivalent of the Third Reich. There is a contradiction here. No one in his right mind would have made moral appeals to Adolf Hitler. Moral appeals make sense only when directed at people with whom one shares a universe of moral discourse. If one expects the South African regime to respond to moral suasion, one cannot at the same time treat it as a moral pariah. Not surprisingly, the effect of the most recent "message" to Pretoria from the United States has been to convince important elements of the regime that there is nothing they can do to please Washington short of surrender, and that they might as well pursue their perceived interests without regard to Western reactions.

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As to the other intended audience of American moral messages, black South Africans, and perhaps blacks elsewhere on the continent, the results are likely to be equally futile. Most people in the world, of whatever race, are either uninterested in America or are favorably inclined toward it. Those who dislike or hate America are typically motivated by envy and resentment, *not* by moral outrage. The notion that black Africans will be grateful to America because of stands taken on their behalf belongs in the curriculum of a moralist's Sunday School, not in serious political discussion. In this regard, one could do worse than recall the reply of Metternich when asked how his government would show its appreciation to Russia for the help rendered in suppressing the Hungarian rebellion of 1848: "Austria will astonish the world by its ingratitude."

WHAT then can outsiders do? One is ever again impressed by the belief, held by people on all sides, that some forceful action or other by Western democracies, and especially by the United States, will have a decisive effect—the notion that apartheid persists because the White House and/or Congress have yet to find the "right" foreign policy by means of which it might be abolished. Short of actions that would be tantamount to a declaration of war, this belief is clearly false.

Yet to say that the West has limited power is not to say that it has no power at all. Western governments have a range of political and economic tools at their disposal to intervene in South Africa, and private-sector groupings in the West can both influence the actions of their governments and deploy resources of their own. The key question is how such limited influence may be deployed to the greatest and best effect.

It is virtually taken for granted that the Reagan administration policy of quiet pressures nudging the government toward reform—the policy known as "constructive engagement"—has failed. Yet what would its success have meant? The complete disappearance of apartheid? If so, of course it has failed. So judged, the policies of previous administrations have also failed. It is, however, of interest that, speaking off the record, senior South African government members have been saying they are glad that constructive engagement is over, because it forced them to go faster and further in what they please to call "the reform process" than they wished. Now, they say, they are freed from this constraint.

Be that as it may, the phrase "constructive engagement" is a good one, suggesting a mixture of pressure and persuasion in an attitude of seeking to understand the other party's concerns rather than simply condemning them as immoral monstrosities. Once again, a major obstacle to this policy's chances of success may well have been the amount of time it was given by both advocates and critics. It is instructive to compare the projected chronologies within which foreign-policy analysts view the developing relationships between the West and the Soviet Union, China, and the Third World in general—chronologies measured in decades of slow, incremental change—with the apocalyptic impatience that has marked Western attitudes toward South Africa.

Rather than abandoning the concept of constructive engagement, we suggest it should be expanded. The critics of the policy have rightly pointed out that its main target was the South African government. Thus, it addressed only one of the major actors in the struggle. It would be pure folly to cease dealing with the government—by analogy, that would be like adopting a policy toward Poland which ignored the Jaruzelski regime in Warsaw and dealt only with Solidarity. But the "engagement" should now embrace all major actors, with the same intent of exercising influence. It should also remain "constructive" in that it would be concerned with results, and would not seek *either* moral condemnation *or* moral legitimation.

This means, for example, that Western governments should enter into a dialogue with the ANC, which is obviously one of the important actors in the situation. On the other hand, the ANC—though it claims (in a phrase all too familiar from the Middle East context) to be "the sole legitimate representative" of South African blacks—is, as we have seen, only one of a number of contenders for power in South Africa. It is no more the role of Western countries than it is the task of that country's present government to choose who speaks for black South Africans. They (and their compatriots of another complexion) are quite capable of making their own choices. A robust process of democracy, in which the ANC would be permitted to participate freely, would provide them with the opportunity to do so. In the meantime, treating the ANC as some sort of government in exile, or as "the sole legitimate representative" of 25 million black South Africans, is not only a gross preemption of democracy, but also a foolish and counterproductive strategy.

WHAT would a South African democracy look like? There exists by now a large number of designs, constitutional or otherwise, for a future, post-apartheid South Africa, and it is not necessary to add another. In any case, the critical question at this time is not how one can design a future South African constitution, but how to initiate the bargaining process that could lead to such a constitution.

All the same, there would seem to be certain minimal conditions for a viable and politically desirable state. It should be genuinely democratic, and not reflect the "democratic centralism" or the one-party hegemony of Leninist notoriety (which many leaders of the ANC and their allies in the

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South African Communist party seem to favor). It should accommodate South Africa's diversity (and not just diversity expressed in racial terms). It should promote both civil and political liberty (an achievement which has eluded almost all liberated territories elsewhere on the African continent). It should promote a growing market-based economy, without which political emancipation will amount to no more than shared (more likely, unequally shared) poverty, continued and exacerbated over time.

The human and political stakes in South Africa are very high indeed. The status quo is one of oppression, degradation, and sorrow for large numbers of people. The horrors which could accompany the replacement of this untenable status quo are potentially equal to any this century has thus far produced. Moreover, a South Africa ruled by a regime well disposed to the Soviet Union would significantly tilt balances of economic power—especially in strategic and "store of value" commodities such as platinum, chrome, gold, and diamonds—and of military power in the Indian Ocean theater against the West.

Yet the potential that would be unleashed by an even relatively successful transition to a freer and more democratic society is awesome. A robust, non-racial democracy would mark a major victory for "Western" values in the Third World. The economic energy of a non-racial, democratic, and market-oriented South Africa could make its role in relation to the African continent analogous to that of postwar Japan in East Asia. Hundreds of millions of Africans could be the beneficiaries.

The capacity exists for both tragedy and triumph on a massive scale. Outsiders can help but only if they are mindful of the local realities. At the same time they would do well to recall the old Hippocratic principle—above all, one should do no further harm.

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Enlisting

A Story

M.E. Liu

I AM at a garden party in Belmont, thinking about conviction and Fort Polk.

Within five minutes of meeting them, the Southern boys of Fort Polk would produce their wallets and pridefully show two snapshots. The first was always a topless or fully nude photo of a wife or a girlfriend. The second was always a car. I never questioned the propriety of these snapshots; I was afraid of the Southern boys. They were a brash, physically large lot, usually raised on farms and given to sudden generosity or violence. Their violence was unpredictable, often triggered by offhand remarks. One week into boot camp I saw two of them in a savage fight over who had a better football team, Texas A & M or Georgia Tech. It wound up in the washroom at the back of the bunk where one managed to beat the other with a shaving mug, sending the beaten man to the hospital where he lost an eye. I wouldn't be surprised if the two later became the best of friends; violence was a form of self-introduction in that strange, unfathomable society.

After they had shown you their snapshots they would explain how they came to join up. Most of course were draftees, but many others had enlisted and they provided simple explanations—"My cousin so-and-so was in the army so I joined too," etc. I dreaded this part of the conversation because I was expected to reciprocate and my reasons for enlisting were not so clear. In fact, I don't think I entirely understood them myself at the time. Eventually I discovered that if I described how and where I enlisted, no one would bother to ask why. They were always more concerned about the spirit of conversation than the content at Fort Polk.

I HAPPENED to join the army at the Cornell University recruitment office in 1971, my last year as an undergrad. It was a sad, gray office in the basement of a neo-gothic gymnasium, a castle with a crenelated stone tower at each corner and a track and basketball courts within. I thought the office would have been better located in one of the towers, behind the slotted arrowports; it would have seemed more appropriate, but it was stuck in the basement instead. There the air never moved and the smell of socks and talcum powder hung powerfully over the sad-faced and dogged recruitment officers. The entrance to both the ROTC and the recruitment office had been egged. Repeated cleanings had discolored the doors. The posters which decorated the hall outside were defaced with obscenities. When the desk sergeant asked me why I wanted to join, I hadn't the heart to tell him either.

Fact is, I wanted to protest the war. The idea came to me after I read about the Vietnam Vets demonstration, the one in which they gave back their medals. I had had enough of the rich kids of Cornell, many of them my friends, who could get medical or educational deferments through a phone call to their parents. I remember attending a rally where a girl next to me carried a poster which read, "If I Were A Man I'd Die Before I'd Murder," which to me seemed a little like saying "If I had to make a moral choice I'd make the right one." There was a lot of this kind of smug morality on campus. In a sense, I rebelled against the rebellion. I devised an ingenious logic which led me to join the army in order to strengthen my moral position against the war. When the Vietnam Vets walked or wheeled themselves to Washington to denounce what they had lived through, it seemed as though the whole country, including the smug campus protesters, took pause. It was as if all the dead heroes of our past had risen to tap our consciences. I wanted to possess that moral power and I had to go to Vietnam to get it. It didn't occur to me that I might be expected to kill people in the process, but then that was 1971 and many ideas which made sense then seem strange now.

OR PERHAPS it's that any idea that qualifies as conviction seems strange now, now as I stand in Ed's living room trying to puzzle it out. I am interrupted by my wife who asks me if I've seen Ed's VCR. We do not own a VCR and, in fact,

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did not even own a television until only a couple of years ago when our son's kindergarten teacher requested that we buy one for "class participation reasons." I follow her to a den, weaving past other couples who chat and chart their futures with stories of emerging affluence. In the den Ed, our host, speeds through a commercial and half a sitcom to demonstrate the fast-forward feature of the gadget. It is strange watching a thirty-minute sitcom flash by in seconds; much funnier, I think, than if it were run at the proper speed. I suggest this to my wife and she says, objectively, how would I know? I never watch sitcoms. That's right, adds Ed, still squatting before the gadget, you guys didn't even *own* a TV until recently.

Watching TV shows and commercials race by at high speed I imagine that this is what one is supposed to experience when one is near death. A whole life, commercials and all, flashes by in an instant, not long enough to savor any one moment, only long enough to give an impression of hope, color, or sadness. But I am speaking out of turn again since I have never been near death, not even during the war.

Ed has been near death. As he squats before the picture, the bluish light reflects on his balding scalp and catches the ridges of his skull and also the edge of a long scar, cunningly tucked into the hairline, where a surgeon removed a small tumor from his brain two years ago. He is almost fully recovered now and except for occasional difficulty in forming certain words, one would never know. He even plays racquetball twice a week.

Ed has just gotten a new job as in-house counsel for a large regional bank. That is one reason for this party. Another reason is that Ed and his wife Mary have recently sold their townhouse in Charlestown and have moved to this converted carriage house in the suburbs. It is late summer and late afternoon now, a good day for a garden party. I leave the den to survey the backyard from an upstairs window. Some of the guests are stringing up a volleyball net between two trees. Thick shrubs rim the backyard and serve to define clearly two edges of the volleyball court. The perimeter of trees, now heavy with late summer leaves, is so thick that one is absently fooled into forgetting that there are other houses close by and the municipal pool not 200 yards to the left. The place is perfect for a party of this kind. The ground is dark green, smelling of earth and wholesomeness and above, between the trees, the sky is blue with clouds that look not like ducks or your father's head, but pure generic clouds. Clouds qua clouds, as it were. It's just a perfect day.

MY WIFE comes up from behind and clasps her arms around my chest. I remove them and continue to watch from the window. She watches too, and asks if I am enjoying the party. I say yes and she says why don't I participate. I say I *am* participating, I am participating by watching. I am celebrating passively. She asks what I am celebrating and I say the day, but that is only half true. I am celebrating something else which only occurred to me as we were driving over—today is the day I enlisted in the army in 1971.

I have never killed anyone, though I briefly wanted to kill the child of a neighbor who, for his own amusement, shot out the side window of our Subaru with a pellet gun. At Fort Polk the army trained me and nineteen other men to fire mortars, a strange, languid kind of weapon, a weapon used to loop lazy arcs of death at an enemy unseen or barely seen in the distance.

We were taught by a muscular black man, rumored to be a Baptist minister on the side, who became a father figure to us. As we squatted in muddy Louisiana trenches, he stood on a sandbag pulpit and lectured us with his fists on his hips. "Gentlemen," he used to say, "once you let the shell drop into your mortar you are in a race." Here he would pause, reveling in his metaphor. "If you win, you win. If you lose, you win. . . . But gentlemen, if you tie, you *lose*!" By which he meant that it was important to clear your hand over the muzzle before the shell hit bottom. Once the shell struck the firing pin at the bottom a small charge would send it back up the tube at a thousand feet per second. If your hand happened to be in the way it would be blown off. He used to repeat the admonition every day we went to the firing range and after a few weeks I took it as a personal anthem. The notion of being in a race with fate has always haunted me. History directs irresistible forces along paths which cross our own. Sometimes these forces are events, sometimes they are institutions, sometimes they are the collective mood of a society, sometimes they are individual persons. Sometimes one triggers the force inadvertently, the fingers slip, the shell drops down the tube, and then look out. That is my impression of one's personal relationship with history, and it is ironic that I have always missed the shell so cleanly that I've never been quite sure I ever crossed paths at all. Where has destiny been all those years since my enlistment when conviction was so strong and history hung in the air like smoke? Personally, I feel a little cheated.

I suppose that it (destiny) blew by me one morning when they roused us one full hour before the sun came up. We assembled in the marching field—an enormous square of loose gravel, six full acres, within a creosoted curb of two by fours, floodlighted by high-intensity sodium lamps which blurred to amber balls of light in the morning drizzle. We stood side by side, 250 of us, all the men of our company, our feet moistening in the mud which oozed up from the gravel. The captain divided us into two groups, Germany and

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Vietnam. Sergeants walked down the line sending men to stand on one side of the captain or the other. The whole thing reminded me of choosing up sides for a basketball game. The man to my left shivered so violently that I could hear the gravel moving under his feet. He was muttering Hail Marys as the sergeants approached but they sent him to Vietnam nonetheless. They sent me to Germany. As I trotted over to the Germany side I stopped halfway and said, "Sergeant, I respectfully request to be sent to Vietnam." This stopped the entire process. A cheer went up among the Southern enlistees; others looked at me in disbelief. Unimpressed, the captain continued to examine his roster. After a second of hesitation one of the sergeants took a threatening step toward me saying, "Shut up and keep moving, soldier." I would have thought that they'd welcome volunteers for combat. I've been puzzling out that odd moment for years, but I guess they wanted to impress us with the inexorable nature of their decision-making. If they allowed some soldiers to lobby successfully for duty in Vietnam, then maybe they'd be deluged with soldiers wanting to switch to Germany. In any event, I continued on to Germany and moved beyond the path of history which swept half our company into Southeast Asia.

It is impossible now, standing at this garden party in Belmont, to think of the possibilities had I gone to Vietnam after all. I can only imagine them in the wistful, romantic ways that men who have never been in combat imagine. This does not bother me. What bothers me is that I cannot now recall the conviction that led me to enlist in order to protest the war. That is, I can remember my line of reasoning, but I can no longer understand it. I can remember possessing strong emotions, but I can't remember what they felt like. Now, at this party, I grasp handfuls of nuts and apricots and squint with the concentration of a stroke victim who cannot recall portions of his life. I feel, I guess, the way Ed felt a whole year after they removed that tumor from his brain. He used to trail off in the middle of sentences from forgetfulness, wrinkling his forehead in chagrin.

But here comes my wife, taking me by the hand, leading me downstairs and out the back door to join the other guests who have gathered in the backyard.

"Have you seen what Ed and Mary have done with the yard?" she asks. I say no.

"Well, first I grubbed out this whole area," says Ed with what, in my present frame of mind, I imagine to be a military sweep of the hand. "You should have seen it before, it was all bush and weeds, completely wild."

"Untamed, a veritable wilderness, chaos," says Mary. She is tending the barbecue, shifting slabs of swordfish, basting them with Ed's secret barbecue sauce. They are a happy couple in spite of, or because of, his illness.

"Yes, I created this small, habitable place of domesticity from unclaimed suburban wildness," he agrees. It is an impressive sentence; he has come far since his operation.

"He made this deck," says my wife, stamping on the wooden platform which supports us.

"Well, I didn't really make it. Somebody else made it, but it was all rotted out so I replaced the boards." We examine our feet and the deck.

"What did you do during the war?" I ask suddenly. There is a pause. I can tell that my wife thinks it's an odd question. It is an odd question.

"Which war?"

"Vietnam."

"I didn't really do anything. I was in school."

"I was a medic in Guam," offers another guest from across the deck. He is now a doctor, an anesthesiologist from Connecticut.

"What was Guam like?" asks a woman next to him. She is a tax analyst with Boston First Federal.

"It was rainy and warm."

From there the conversation moves on to a comparison of Tahiti and Bali. The consensus is that Bali is much more pleasant if you don't mind Australians. The net is ready in the yard and five or six guests are batting the volleyball back and forth trying to keep a rally going. My wife puts her hands on my shoulders from behind as I sit in a director's chair and watch the players. It is bothersome, but endurable, like the constant mist which settled on us in the Louisiana winter. I see the woman, the tax analyst, rise and approach Ed asking a variation of that question I hear so often.

"So tell me about your new job, what is it that you do?"

"I'm an in-house counsel. I do syndications, mainly." (I spend most of my time testing myself, he should say, to see if I don't really need that portion of my brain they removed two summers ago.)

She finishes with Ed and approaches me. "How about you? Are you a lawyer too?"

No, I'm a mortarman. I was trained on a four-deuce but the eighty-one millimeter is my specialty. I prefer the eighty-one because it's easy to carry, quick to set up, and one man can carry many rounds of ammunition. I don't practice, I got sidelined and make my living as a journalist.

Ed has joined the volleyball game and calls me to join too. I wave from my director's chair. "No thanks," I say, and raise a styrofoam cup full of ginger ale to indicate I'm absorbed in another activity. They cajole me; the players need me to make the sides even and won't take no for an answer. The ball loops high in the air as they rally. It sails briefly against the sky, framed in an opening in the trees above, then drops into

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the players. They call me again and I rise at last, throw my empty cup into the waste bin, and join the game. As I play I am thinking of this last memory, sensuous and physical as the memory of your head against your mother's shoulder.

We had all gone down to the firing range in Grafenwoehr one drunken night, bribed the duty officer to let us in, loaded up the rifles with phosphorous tracers and set the selector switches on automatic. I squeezed the trigger and from the other end a liquid stream of red flame arched out into the night, long and shallow, to touch the earth again miles away. The stock of the rifle nuzzled gently and persistently against my shoulder as the pulsing tracers burned a bridge of light.

It was like memory itself, that bridge of light. It seemed more solid than solid, connecting me to the distant landscape. Yet the sensation it produced was completely illusory, and I knew it as the magazine was exhausted, the last lick of flame retreating along the bridge until the bridge was gone, the last shell casing falling to the ground like loose change.

The ball catches the top of the net off an ineffective spike and pops into the other side. My wife, it happens, is there to swat it back and at last I have my chance to play the game. The ball comes to me, arching gently over the net to where I wait. My teammates call for me to spike but I send it up high instead and let it drop into an undefended corner for the point.

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Literacy at the Barricades

James W. Tuttleton

We are at present embroiled in a public crisis over the literacy of the American people, sparked a couple of years ago by the sensationalist book of Jonathan Kozol, *Illiterate America*, and fed dutifully in the interim by the news magazines and television networks, with their even more sensationalist "coverage" of this latest American failing.

Some professional educationists see nothing to get upset about. This crisis, they say, with its attendant call for reforms to eliminate illiteracy, recurs regularly in American life. So far as the educational bureaucracy is concerned, it will all blow over in fifteen minutes and they can go back to doing what they have always been doing. In this attitude they have an ally of a sort in Harvey J. Graff, who in his new book, *The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture and Society*,* reassures us that, by the 1960's in the United States, "illiteracy had fallen close to the irreducible minimum of the disabled and handicapped."

Others, however, may find no cause for celebration in this statement, if only because Graff restricts his definition of literacy to the technical skill of reading and writing. About this he is quite correct, and his statement as formulated stands as a useful corrective to the overblown alarums raised by the likes of Jonathan Kozol. But the real problem is functional literacy, and there are facts that spoil the celebration.

Thus, according to a report of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), "between 1970 and 1980 seventeen-year-olds declined in their ability to understand written materials. . . ." Further, verbal SAT scores have declined drastically in the past fifteen years. Out of "a constant pool of about a million [SAT] test takers each year, 56 percent more students scored above 600 in 1972 than did so in 1984. More startling yet, the percentage drop was even greater for those scoring above 650 —73 percent." A final dismal fact: the 1987 NAEP test results will indicate that "two-thirds of our seventeen-year-olds do not know that the Civil War occurred between 1850 and 1900. Three-quarters do not know what *reconstruction* means. Half do not know the meaning of the *Brown* decision and cannot identify either Stalin or Churchill."

I take this information from two new studies, David Harman's *Illiteracy: A National Dilemma*† and *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*, by the distinguished literary scholar E.D. Hirsch, Jr.** And what Harman and Hirsch show to be true of our high-school students is becoming increasingly true of higher education as well. As William J. Bennett, the Secretary of Education, noted in *To Reclaim a Legacy*, the report he produced while serving as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities: "Too many students are graduating from American colleges and universities lacking even the most rudimentary knowledge about the history, literature, art, and philosophical foundations of their nation and civilization."

The litany of "causes" to account for why Johnny can't read or, if he can, why he doesn't know anything, is a long and familiar one: TV, popular culture, nonsupportive parents, lack of government funds, the substitution of electives for prescribed curricula, primer-style textbooks, grade inflation, jungle-like schools, drugs, politicized school boards, segregation, desegregation, liberalism, even conservatism. The educational establishment likes to defend itself by blaming society. Thus Harman, a professor of education at Columbia Teachers College, opines that schools are just a microcosm of society, and until society cleans up its act the schools cannot be expected to show much progress in combating illiteracy.

But this will hardly do. The new concern over literacy in America justifies, I believe, a fuller consideration of the issues raised by these new studies, among which E.D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy* is clearly the most innovative and therefore the most likely to be controversial.

According to Hirsch, "in the United States, only two-thirds of our citizens are literate, and even among those the average level is too low and should be raised. The remaining third of our citizens need to be brought as close to true literacy as possible." How can this be done? Certainly not by regarding literacy as the simple technical skill of reading and writing, for most Americans can make out the words. The literacy we need, according to Hirsch, is *cultural* literacy. For him, that means possessing

> the basic information needed to thrive in the modern world. The breadth of that information is great, extending over the major domains of human activity from sports to science. It is by no

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* Indiana University Press, 493 pp., $57.50.

† Cambridge—The Adult Education Company, 113 pp., $11.95.

** Houghton, Mifflin, 251 pp., $16.95.

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means confined to "culture" narrowly understood as an acquaintance with the arts. Nor is it confined to one social class.

It is Hirsch's contention that schools used to impart this kind of basic information, but they no longer do so, because teachers "are compelled to teach a fragmented curriculum based on faulty educational theories." The schools, then, *pace* Harman and the education establishment generally, are *the* source of the problem. If they are to help break "the cycle of . . . illiteracy," they must "themselves break fundamentally with some of the theories and practices that education professors and school administrators have followed over the past fifty years."

THE *bête noire*, for Hirsch, is John Dewey, whose *Schools of Tomorrow* (1915) inaugurated a "progressive" theory of education according to which only the skills of reading and writing need be taught and "early education need not be tied to specific content." This method, which has dominated our schools for the past half century, has led to appalling fragmentation in the curriculum, yet some educationists still brightly defend it. Here is Charles H. Rathbone in *Open Education* (1971): "There is no indispensable body of knowledge that every single child should know." And here is P.S. Anderson in *Language Skills in Elementary Education* (1972), arguing for letting the child pick his own subjects and pace: "The self-selection program allows each child to seek whatever reading material stimulates him and work at his own rate with what he has chosen." No wonder that, as Bennett puts it, so many American teachers operate on the assumption "that it is no longer possible to reach a consensus on the most significant thinkers, the most compelling ideas, and the books all students should read." By now, the blind are truly being led by the blind.

Hirsch's answer to the educational anarchy which "progressive" theory has produced is to have the schools teach "the network of information that all competent readers possess." Invoking contemporary anthropology, he argues the forgotten truism that "all human communities are founded upon specific shared information," and only by mastering this information can children "learn to participate in complex cooperative activities with other members of their community." A major goal of education, therefore, must be "acculturation, the transmission to children of the specific information shared by the adults of the group or *polis*."

WHAT should children know and when should they know it? Since literacy is not just a skill but an interaction between reading and writing and specific content, Hirsch is quite blunt in stating that children need to know the informational context in which what is read can be understood: "Every text, even the most elementary, implies information that it takes for granted and doesn't explain. Knowing such information is *the* decisive skill of reading." One of the difficulties in providing this information is that its boundaries are somewhat imprecise; according to Hirsch, it "lies *above* the everyday levels of knowledge that everyone possesses and *below* the expert level known only to specialists. It is that middle ground of cultural knowledge possessed by the 'common reader.'" And it is this that the schools must teach.

Hirsch concludes his book with a list of some 5,000 items that currently define what culturally literate Americans know that everyone else should know, for maximum communication and comprehension. Sample items on the list include: Acropolis, affirmative action, burn the candle at both ends, Capitol Hill, Joseph Conrad, Daniel in the lion's den, D-Day, Garden of Eden, Freud, geisha, hoi polloi, the Inquisition, LBJ, Knesset, lean and hungry look, macho, natural rights, parabola, Qaddafi, recombinant DNA, the Sabbath, tabula rasa, union shop, wishbone, x-ray, Yeats, and *Zeitgeist*.

The items may seem arbitrary, and some even trivial. But the list, derived from extensive questionnaires, in fact suggests what a wide and diverse sampling of Americans —of various ages, races, and occupations—*do* know. Once known, moreover, each of these items is available for integration into a larger scheme of cognate associative information. If you encounter and recognize "Qaddafi" in the newspaper, what is written there integrates itself with other items of information the journalist expects you to know: militant Islam, anti-Zionism, terrorism, kidnapped hostages, the U.S. raid on Tripoli, etc. These items of information, arbitrary as they might seem, constitute the structures of a "databank" for future recall and comprehension.

To be sure, the list is unstable at the periphery. As the years pass it may be less and less important to know who Qaddafi is, or was. This item will be replaced by another. But Hirsch is still right to assert that there are certain constants in what literate Americans know about the sciences, the arts, and the humanities: Valley Forge, tax loophole, the Good Samaritan, placenta, Hitler, free verse, kleptomania. On this score, Hirsch's views are solidly buttressed by the conclusions of serious research in cognitive psychology, anthropology, and sociology.

BUT Hirsch goes beyond discrete items of information to larger issues of cultural values and ideals. Indeed, one of the most striking items on the list of things Hirsch thinks our children should be taught is the ethos of the "American civil religion":

> Our civil ethos treasures patriotism and loyalty as high, though perhaps not ultimate, ideals and fosters the belief that the conduct of the nation is guided by a vaguely defined God. Our tradition places importance on carrying out the rites and ceremonies of our civil ethos and religion through the national flag, the national holidays, and the national anthem (which means "national hymn"), and supports the morality of tolerance and benevolence, of the Golden Rule, and communal cooperation. We believe in altruism, self-help, in equality, freedom, truth telling, and respect for the national law.

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I confess I find it quite wonderful that a man of Hirsch's intellectual caliber can, in this country and at this time, quite unembarrassedly advise that the meaning of the flag, public oaths, Washington's birthday, even the "bible" of our civil ethos ought to be taught. (The "books" of this "bible" are the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Gettysburg Address, some parts of the Bible itself, Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, etc.) This civil ethos is not narrowly religious, although it obviously owes much to the Judeo-Christian heritage in America, nor can instruction in it lead to the establishment of a state religion; but it constitutes in itself "a central source of coherence in American public culture, holding together various and even contradictory elements of its tradition." As such, the civil ethos needs to be imparted systematically to the young.

Hirsch correctly insists that his is not a conservative agenda:

> Literate culture is the most democratic culture in our land: it excludes nobody; it cuts across generations and social groups and classes; it is not usually one's first culture, but it should be everyone's second, existing as it does beyond the narrow spheres of family, neighborhood, and region.

He points out that the culturally illiterate—and the same goes for those not having a command of standard English—can exercise no effect on discourse concerning social policy, whereas "the traditional forms of literate culture are precisely the most effective instrument for political and social change." In this connection he also astutely observes of conservatives "who wish to preserve traditional values" that these values "are not necessarily inculcated by a traditional education, which can in fact be subversive of the status quo."

DEFEND it as he will, however, Hirsch's proposed curriculum is bound to raise howls of protest from the educationist establishment. One can imagine, for instance, the response of someone like Barbara Finkelstein (cited in Graff's history of literacy) who in *Regulated Children/Liberated Children* complains that children, in learning to read, are taught at the same time "to suspend judgment, to obey instantly, to read and write unwittingly, to derive standards of conduct from rules and regulations imposed by teachers." This is the familiar progressivist complaint that prescribed education nips genius in the bud, homogenizes the mind, and produces the politically submissive. It is a complaint that lurks as well in the background of Harvey J. Graff's *The Legacies of Literacy*.

In the foreground of that book, however, is a useful and detailed synthesis of what has been written about the development of alphabetic literacy from antiquity to the modern age. Graff gives us an account of how literacy arose in Mesopotamia, what the Egyptian temple priests read and wrote, who among the Attic Greeks was literate, the function of reading in the several medieval kingdoms, the number of women who could read and write in the Renaissance, how Sweden attained universal literacy in the 18th century, the ideology of literacy in revolutionary France, what happened to letters in the Industrial Revolution, and where he thinks we stand now.

The issue of literacy in premodern societies presents certain problems of analysis and verification. Reading and writing, it should be remembered, are separate skills, and the possession of one is not a guarantee of the other. But Graff has studied the data available in wills and dowries, adoption and manumission decrees, deeds and licenses, and other documents where often only signatures provide the key, and his many statistical tables and charts—dealing with literacy by age, sex, family occupation, country, city, shire, and village—organize the data in an illuminating way.

Something of the complications in the social hierarchy of a time and place can be inferred from these tables. Graff rightly points out that, depending on circumstances, illiteracy might not always have been a social stigma and might have nothing to do with wealth or status. Those who regard the goal of universal literacy as coterminous with mandatory public schools will be surprised by Graff's persuasive account of the achievement of full literacy in pre-industrial Iceland by the 18th century. Feminists will find a treasury of facts about the literacy of women in Graff's compendious study. Surprisingly, though, he has little to say about the literacy of Jews throughout history, although they have been preeminently people of the word and the book.

BUT sooner or later nearly every discussion of literacy turns into a discussion of values, and Graff's is no exception. One remarkable feature of this book is its primitivist bias. Graff has decided that the post-Enlightenment correlation of literacy with progress, socioeconomic advancement, and personal or class liberation is simply a Western "myth." "Not long ago," he writes, "anthropologists equated civilization with literacy," but they no longer do so. In developing his argument in praise of older yet complex societies where illiteracy was common, Graff commends the proposition—which he ascribes to Jack Goody in *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*—that "literacy does not represent civilization and progress, and that its absence does not indicate barbarity." Moreover, even today it is our oral and not our written exchanges that constitute by far the most influential determinant in human intercourse.

Graff has a point: talk, talk, talk is still the primary medium for the transmission of cultural information and values. And so long as we do not go overboard, we may concede that the ancient Greeks created some of the elements of a great civilization on a minimal base of literacy, and that some primitive tribes can teach us a thing or two. But the idealization of the primitive, preliterate, or illiterate is a form of romantic sentimentalism; and to translate this bias into contemporary public policy (say, in our Indian reservation schools), is to doom the people of such cultures to what Hirsch calls "the powerlessness of incomprehension."

A second feature of Graff's study

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is an implicit radicalism, papered over by a mask of historical objectivity. Graff's work hangs upon Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, the mechanism by which a dominant class secures compliance with its own value system. This notion assumes that the cultural system being inculcated is founded on a "consensual basis" rather than on coercion, and Graff expends considerable energy in denying that any overt conspiracy is at work in the processes by which various dominant groups, at various times and places, have established hegemonic control over literacy in order to effect "group and class formation, recruitment, indoctrination, and maintenance [of values] at all levels of society." Still, conspiracy or no, it seems an elite has always been pulling the strings, and the masses have always been gulled.

As we move toward modern times in Graff's apparently detached analysis, we sense a distinct aversion on his part to the management of social affairs, including literacy, by the democratic bourgeoisie. The 19th-century American view that everyone ought to be schooled to read and write Graff calls a "bias" of "the middle and upper-middle classes and the dominant social groups and their conceptions of culture, order, norms, behavior, and values." More ominously, it is an article of his faith that "much of education's function is to reproduce intergenerationally the social and class structures and to shape the processes of intergenerational inheritance of wealth and status." As he puts it, in the transition from mercantilism to an industrial capitalist order, social institutions demanded universal literacy in order "to meet perceived threats of crime, disorder, and poverty; counteract cultural diversity; prepare and discipline a work force; and replace traditional popular culture with new values and habits." As a statement of the function of education in Western democratic societies, this is a frankly appalling piece of reductionism.

Graff acknowledges—in two short paragraphs of this nearly 500-page book—that widespread literacy may have contributed to "progress in occupation and wealth, cultural participation and acquisition of knowledge and information, struggles for organization and power, abilities and skills, and consequent sense of self- and social worth." And he admits that literacy has had something to do with "the processes that have come to be called 'modernization': social, political, and economic development." But these stunning developments, these grand transformations that have helped to build and sustain the great free democracies in the West, are apparently of little moment in view of the system's manipulation of literacy as a means of indoctrinating individuals in the values of the dominant group. That American society may have wanted to put individuals in possession of the tools of self-understanding and personal advancement, or that social conscience and the welfare of individuals may underlie our concern about literacy—these never fully register with Graff. Conspicuously, he provides nothing of the testimony of individuals for whom the opportunity to learn to read and write has meant the discovery of a wholly new world of understanding.

Hirsch, of course, cares not a fig for discussions in the style of Graff's *The Legacies of Literacy*. Paralyzing arguments about the hegemony of the middle class are, in his view, simply dooming millions of American children to social marginality. Since we are one nation with a distinctive culture created by and richly available to all, and since our communication with one another depends upon our common understanding of its cultural forms, Hirsch calls for a national program that will give our children information not provided under the disastrous reign of progressive education. For Hirsch, "Preschool is not too early for starting earnest instruction in literate national culture. Fifth grade is almost too late. Tenth grade usually *is* too late." He wants a wholesale reform in textbooks, curricula, methods, and requirements.

The Hirsch plan is a tall order in a nation of some 16,000 independent school districts, many of them managed by neighborhood boards more interested in politics and patronage than in the education of the young. And when one adds the obstacle posed by the education establishment itself, with its by-now extended commitment to the progressivist mentality, and that posed by skeptical intellectuals with a penchant *à la* Graff for romantic primitivism, or a distaste for the workings of the democratic majority, one can be driven from skepticism into something closer to despair.

Still, Hirsch has raised a challenge to these forces that cannot be dismissed as a merely conservative maneuver, and there is heart to be taken in the strikingly positive response his book has elicited in some quarters of the mainstream press. Obviously what teachers, principals, school boards, and college faculties have been doing is not working; is it too much to hope we may finally be ready to discuss ways of doing better?

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Prophets With Tenure

Richard John Neuhaus

MICHAEL WALZER is surely in the front ranks of contemporary social critics. His major works, such as *Spheres of Justice* (1983), command respectful attention among many moral philosophers and political theorists. One may well disagree with the distinctly left-of-center political purposes to which Walzer puts his theoretical work, but there is no doubt that he has influenced the intellectual geography. Still, although we know what Walzer has done, until now it has not been quite clear what Walzer himself thinks he has done. That lacuna is filled in part by *Interpretation and Social Criticism*,* an engaging and eminently readable "theoretical preamble" to a larger and "more explicitly political" book Walzer says he is working on.

Walzer begins the three lectures at Harvard which comprise the book at hand by suggesting that there are "three paths" that moral philosophy can take: discovery, invention, and interpretation. Historically, the path of discovery has typically been religious, like Moses at Sinai. The discovery is of something new; it tells us what we did not and could not know by ourselves. Of course secular philosophers also claim to make moral discoveries by wrenching themselves from their particularities and viewing moral reality from "no particular point of view" (Thomas Nagel); presumably, this "no particular point of view" approximates the objectivity of God's point of view. But Walzer is not much impressed by such a claim. For one thing, these secular discoveries usually tell us only what we already know. For another, the philosophers' vaunted "objectivity" is just another form of particularity. Walzer has more "confidence" in religious discoveries, and therefore regrets that they are no longer possible. He notes, in somewhat elegiac tones, "It suggests what we lose when we lose our belief in God."

But secular philosophers can and do follow the second path, the path of moral "invention." Although Walzer does not put it this way, moral invention is the great project of the secular Enlightenment. Kant and his epigones, utilitarianism, contractarianism—all aim at "imitating God's creation rather than the discoveries of his [religious] servants." They are, of course, imitating God's creative work in the practical absence of God.

Philosophers who walk the path of invention must be much preoccupied with methodology; they need "a design of a design procedure." Here Jürgen Habermas comes in for attention, and John Rawls's *Theory of Justice*. Toward such efforts Walzer is respectful, but he remains unpersuaded. The fact is that morality, Walzer believes, is a social and cultural given. People can imagine themselves going behind Rawls's "veil of ignorance" in order to invent a new moral world but, having imagined a world other than their own, why should they want to take up permanent residence in it? Such an invented world is, says Walzer, like a perfectly designed hotel. It might be very good in many respects, but it is not "home."

A home is precisely what the social critic has. He is, or should be, a "connected critic"—connected to "a dense moral culture within which [he] can feel some sense of belonging." He does not discover morality, nor does he invent morality; he interprets morality. Walzer is chary of the word tradition, perhaps because of its conservative connotations, but it is tradition and community that he champions in theory. Although Edmund Burke is never mentioned, Walzer's theoretical constructs are much closer to Burke than to Rawls and the utilitarians, never mind to Habermas and the Marxians. Perhaps Walzer recognizes this, for he apparently feels the need to insist repeatedly that the social critic as interpreter can be not a whit less radical than the social critic as discoverer or inventor.

Walzer suggests that the three paths of moral philosophy can be roughly compared with the three branches of government. Discovery is for the executive branch, invention for the legislative, and interpretation for the judicial. We are all in the judicial branch now because in a "dense moral culture" the executive and legislative branches have done their work. "The claim of interpretation is simply this: that neither discovery nor invention is necessary because we already possess what they pretend to provide." The stuff of morality is culturally secured; now all is interpretation.

To be sure, the moral stuff is secured in specific cultures, and not all cultures have the same moral stuff. The moral question asked by the "connected" social critic is not about the right thing to do in general but, in Walzer's words, "What is the right thing *for us* to do?" There may be a kind of "minimal code" that applies to all cultures—do not murder, deceive, betray, etc.—but this is pretty thin, and it is not possible to deduce from it a "thick" moral culture. Nor does the question of what is morally "true" arise in Walzer's argument. (As for God, it is apparently possible to believe that He was, but not that He is.)

WHO are the social critics? They are those with a special gift and calling for moral interpretation. The social critic is a "sage," and sages may well be found outside

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the world of the professional adepts who constitute "the interpretive community." People who know about morality are not necessarily moral philosophers, but they, and moral philosophers who do their duty, are all social critics. "There is a tradition, a body of moral knowledge; and there is this group of sages, arguing. There isn't anything else."

Social criticism is not only the criticism of society; it is an activity that is itself social in nature. "When our country behaves badly, it is still ours, and we are, perhaps, especially obligated to criticize its policies." The critic is detached but not marginal; indeed he is "detached from his own marginality." Nor is criticism always negative; Walzer, calling it part of the larger "activity of cultural elaboration and affirmation," disagrees with those who view social critics as constituting a subversive "new class" or "adversary culture."

The maxim for the critic who would be effective is: "A little to the side, but not outside: critical distance is measured in inches." The critic must not step outside the community or turn against the community. That was the mistake that Sartre made during the Algerian war. Although he was "a consistent and brave critic of French society," his embrace of the title "traitor" was a grave error since it "cut the ground from under his own enterprise." "An enemy," says Walzer, "is not recognizable as a social critic; he lacks standing." An enemy's criticism is simply beside the point.

Of course in some communities (Walzer cites the Amish and the Hasidim) there may be no room at all for criticism, and the critic must of necessity become marginal or even an enemy. Presumably this may also be the case in societies such as the Soviet Union. In our kind of society, however, what is called for is "criticism from within," or an "immanent critique." Ironically, the critic from within can be much more radical than the enemy, by identifying with society but also setting himself "against the prevailing political forces" and opposing all the "ideologists" who offer apologies for the "status quo." If the problem with "disconnected critics" like the Marxists and others who would force a new social order from the outside is that they end up indulging in what Walzer calls "unattractive politics," proper social critics can lodge the same criticisms much more effectively, "by elaborating on existing moralities and telling stories about a society more just than, though never entirely different from, our own."

THE last chapter is "The Prophet as Social Critic," but it is really about the social critic as prophet. Walzer takes the biblical prophet Amos for his model, since Amos, in Walzer's telling, did pretty much what today's social critic should be doing. To be sure, the prophets thought they had a message from God, the late Chief Executive. Or, as Walzer puts it, they "attribute their message to God." But in reality their reference was entirely to a shared knowledge of the history and culture of Israel.

As is the case today, the biblical prophets could be effective because they drew from the cultural resources of the people a picture of what Israel could and should be. Theirs was the immanent critique of the connected critic. Moreover, the prophets were nothing if not particularistic: their argument was that "this people must live in this way." As Walzer summarizes their stance:

> This is the standard form of social criticism, and though later critics rarely achieve the angry poetry of the prophets, we can recognize in their work the same intellectual structure: the identification of public pronouncements and respectable opinion as hypocritical, the attack upon actual behavior and institutional arrangements, the search for core values (to which hypocrisy is always a clue), the demand for an everyday life in accordance with the core.

This may sound terribly negative, even polemical and agitational. But, Walzer assures us, it begins and ends in affirmation. The effective prophet-critic does not stand aloof from those he criticizes. "Nor is he emotionally detached; he does not wish the natives well, he seeks the success of their common enterprise." While Walzer does not use the term, there is even a kind of patriotism involved. Although the social critic need not love the people, he must be devoted to their project which, with his prophetic help, they may yet come to recognize as their project.

Interpretation and Social Criticism is an important book—because it discloses something of the self-understanding of Michael Walzer, himself an important protagonist in current moral debates about America and its role in the world, and because Walzer's self-understanding is shared by thousands of others who think of themselves as social critics, although they may occupy less exalted platforms than Harvard and the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. More than that, *Interpretation* reflects a growing and, in my judgment, salutary skepticism toward the Rawlsian "inventors" of morality who would construct ethics from the perspective of the "disinterested spectator."

Although there may not be anything substantively original in Walzer's argument, he does make a lively case for the moral actor as a culturally "embedded" and "situated" self. His parable about the difference between designing a hotel room and living at home is a memorable and, so far as I know, original contribution. In addition, he offers sage advice to would-be critics on why people are not likely to accept criticism from those whom they perceive to be their enemies. Admittedly, this advice can be exploited cynically—the unscrupulous might welcome *Interpretation* as a handbook for intellectual fifth columnists—but we must assume that is not Walzer's intention.

And yet, its merits granted, the book does leave the reader with disturbing questions. For one thing, Walzer is marvelously insouciant about the dangers of the sin of presumption in taking oneself to be a prophet. Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote of the awe-

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filled dread experienced by the biblical prophets. To speak the prophetic word was "a risk beyond measure, the invocation of a judgment under which no man can stand." Walzer bears up under the pressure wonderfully well. True, he has considerably reduced the risk by invoking no judgment higher than that of the community of critical consciousness to which he belongs. Nonetheless, there is an unseemly eagerness in his vocation.

In biblical times, the true prophets were reluctant prophets. The Lord took them by the scruff of their necks and forced them, kicking and screaming all the way, to do their prophetic duty. Their protest was not without reason, for the fate of a prophet was usually not a happy one. At least there is no recorded instance of a true prophet ending up as a tenured sage at the ancient version of the Institute for Advanced Study.

In addition, one wishes that Walzer had addressed the troubling issue raised by the fact that in the days of Jeremiah, Hosea, and Amos the vast majority of those who claimed to be prophets were false prophets. Here again there is a risk factor that he seems not to have entertained. The reason for his failure to do so may lie in his assumption that someone like Amos represents "the standard form of social criticism," when in fact prophecy is a startling instance of intervention by the God in Whom, with regrets, Walzer says he does not believe.

How then might we identify the prophets, if there are any, in our own time? Walzer claims the prophetic mantle for social critics, but he does not specify who in particular might belong to that distinguished company. His criteria for membership include several factors. Prophets are detached but not altogether marginal, hold unpopular and anti-establishment views, and, above all, are opposed to the status quo. Walzer may not be pleased to find himself in such company, but one cannot help noticing that the fundamentalist preachers of today's religious Right would seem to fit rather neatly what he calls the "standard form"; moreover, there is in their case, unlike in Walzer's, the additional fillip that they do claim to speak the word of God.

If Walzer would deny these people membership in his prophetic elite, it would probably have to be on the basis of a disagreement with their politics, or perhaps on the basis of their social class. I confess that this would strike me as profoundly unfair, and also inconsistent with Walzer's larger purpose. If this society needs as much criticism as Walzer says it does, the procedure for becoming a certified prophet should be inclusive rather than exclusive. We can hardly have too many voices assailing the hated status quo.

There is an additional similarity between Walzer's social critics and the prophets of the religious Right. "The Prophet as Social Critic" insists that our situation is essentially the same as that addressed by Amos. That is to say, "we" too, like ancient Israel, are an elect people burdened by a history freighted with singular moral mandates for which we are to be held accountable. Now, until the practice went out of fashion in the early part of this century, old-line Protestantism regularly drew direct parallels between America and Israel of old. In contemporary American discourse the only people to do so are some evangelical and fundamentalist Christians—and, it now appears, Michael Walzer.

To be sure, they draw the parallel for quite different purposes. The religious Right suggests that America is elected by God to bring freedom, prosperity, and spiritual salvation to the world. Walzer suggests that America is elected by history to be fair game for a moral critique.

On a pair of related points it is not possible to take Michael Walzer entirely seriously. For some puzzling reason, he insists that his prophet-critics do not constitute a "new knowledge class" or an "adversary culture." And yet elsewhere in the book he flatly states, "Criticism is an adversarial proceeding." The objects of that adversarial proceeding he specifies, without naming names, as "defenders of the status quo" *within our own society*. Walzer is very definite that the adversarial relationship is "not between critics from one culture and critics from another." That is so for the obvious reason that an "immanent critique" can only be practiced on people within the same society, or across societies that share a similar culture.

One might take this to mean that countries like the Soviet Union, Vietnam, and Cuba—countries that practice "unattractive politics"—are let off the hook. But in fact Walzer passes on such countries the harshest judgment of all: they are beyond the sphere of justice, they are outside the community of significant moral discourse; they are, in short, barbarians, unfit for the elevated moral criteria by which "we" are to be judged. This would seem to be the logical reason why Walzer's sages are to concentrate their energies instead on the real adversary —the "hypocritical" culture that fails to live up to its moral pretensions. Such a culture deserves all that the new knowledge class can dish out, and one may be sure that Michael Walzer, for one, has done his duty by the cause.

A final matter: after God, after the moral discoveries, after the moral inventors, after the moral interpreters, who is to attend to *renewing* the moral stuff of our culture? Unfortunately, Walzer does not address this question. Perhaps he assumes that it is somebody else's worry. Prophets, after all, have enough on their hands. Or perhaps he believes that morality is an inexhaustible cultural resource. He professes great respect for the "dense moral culture" of which he is part, and yet those who would nurture the habits, virtues, and institutions of that culture are dismissed as "defenders of the status quo." Walzer seems to take for granted that the moral referents will always be in place. He is undisturbed by the charge that his social critical program is essentially parasitic on the cumulative morality of the past. And that is very disturbing indeed.

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Hegel made the useful distinction between *Sittlichkeit* and *Moralität*. The former is the customary morality of a particular culture; the latter is drawn from the normative rules and reasons by which the former can be affirmed, challenged, and renewed. *Moralität* has to do with what Walzer calls moral discovery and invention. But in Walzer's world of interpretation and exploitation, everything is *Sittlichkeit*. As he says, "There isn't anything else." Does he really believe this? A customary morality that is critically turned against customary morality must sooner or later consume itself.

In addition, Walzer's entire prophetic enterprise depends upon being able to invoke, from somewhere, a higher morality by which the customary morality is judged; or so it would seem. Walzer could respond that the higher morality is the customary morality, the *Moralität* is the *Sittlichkeit*. But then his "immanent critique" would turn into a truly radical version of what has been called the immanentization of the transcendent. Perhaps, indeed, that is the move Walzer wants to make, but if so it is a terribly convoluted one. Moreover, it would seem to preclude the possibility of moral judgment in any meaningful sense of the term, since all conflicts then become no more than disputes over preferred customs. Prophecy of some kind might limp along without God, but it is hard to see how it can do without moral judgment. "There isn't anything else" thus becomes a formula for driving out of business the very social criticism that Walzer is promoting.

An appealing prospect, some might think; but we should resist it. Social criticism undoubtedly has its uses, and it need not be as logically incoherent, morally presumptuous, and politically obtuse as Walzer makes it out to be. Of course we cannot expect Michael Walzer to agree that his argument is morally presumptuous and politically obtuse. I would not be surprised, however, if he took little umbrage at the claim that his argument is incoherent. After all, Amos was no systematic thinker, either.

Fiction

Defenders of the Faith

Robert Alter

SOME readers may be a little surprised to discover that Cynthia Ozick's new novel, *The Messiah of Stockholm*,* is dedicated to Philip Roth. It will be a surprise from another direction that Philip Roth has dedicated his new novel, *The Counterlife*,† to his father. He, after all, ever since his first collection of stories, *Goodbye, Columbus*, has figured in the minds of certain Jewish loyalists as the exemplary self-hating Jewish intellectual, a writer who uses his fiction to defame the world of his parents, to reject its familial and communal values. (Almost a quarter of a century ago, a memorable exchange between Roth and his readers on just this question appeared in the pages of this magazine.**) Cynthia Ozick, on the other hand, both in her essays and in her fiction, has often appeared (to borrow the title of an early Roth story) as a defender of the faith: a passionate Zionist, a critic of what she shrewdly identifies as the parochialism of Jewish universalism, and, above all, as an intransigent polemicist, in the name of simon-pure Jewish tradition, against the very hedonistic paganism to which so many of Roth's protagonists seem to aspire. Has something changed in the work of either writer that these twain should now meet?

The immediate reason for Miss Ozick's dedication of this particular book to Roth is the Polish Jewish writer Bruno Schulz, murdered by a German officer in the ghetto of Drohobycz in Poland in 1942, whose life and work are the axis on which the plot of *The Messiah of Stockholm* turns. Schulz's fiction was introduced to readers of English by Roth through two volumes that appeared in the admirable series he edits for Penguin, Writers from the Other Europe. Miss Ozick's dedication, then, could be taken simply as a token of literary gratitude. But beyond any common interest she and Roth may share in one writer, these two books remind us that all along the two have had a similar preoccupation with writing as a subject of fiction —with the writer's immersion in words; the question of audience; the impact of criticism; the issues of originality, imitation, discipleship, plagiarism; and overarching all these, the relation of the imagination to whatever it is that we mean by reality.

The Messiah of Stockholm focuses these concerns in a novel that is literary in a straightforwardly realistic way, set in the small world defined by the triangle of the book-review offices of a Stockholm daily, the tiny book-filled bachelor apartment of the protagonist, and a bookstore run by an old woman of dubious origins. *The Counterlife*, on the other hand, is a new departure for Roth in not merely representing a literary subject (one of its two alternating protagonists is the novelist Nathan Zuckerman) but in being a self-reflexive novel —that is, a fictional work that, in the interests of imaginatively investigating the larger uses of fiction, repeatedly calls attention to its own precarious condition as mere fiction.

Novels of this sort go back as

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† Farrar Straus & Giroux, 324 pp., $18.95. I reviewed this book shortly after it was published (*New Republic*, February 2, 1987).

** Letters from Readers, April 1964, on Philip Roth's article, "Writing About Jews," December 1963.

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far as *Don Quixote* and *Tristram Shandy*, and in our own century constitute an important tradition from Gide to Nabokov to the French New Novelists to contemporaries like John Fowles and John Barth. But what bearing does the self-reflexive mode have on the urgent issues of Jewish identity that continue to preoccupy Philip Roth, and what is the relation of the relentlessly literary novel to that overriding concern with Jewish values—beyond the idolatry of art—which Cynthia Ozick has proclaimed so often in her essays?

The question about Miss Ozick is by far the harder one to answer. The location of *The Messiah of Stockholm* in Sweden makes it her first pervasively "Gentile" fiction, and it has as a consequence a certain quality of abstractness, not unlike that of Roth's "Wasp" novel, *When She Was Good*, which was set in the American heartland far from the urban Jewish types whose minutest mannerisms and verbal tics he knows so subtly. The only "Jewish" presence in *The Messiah of Stockholm* is the rather remote one of the ghost of Bruno Schulz. The protagonist, Lars Andemening, a divorced, isolated, impoverished daily book-reviewer, entertains a kind of hopeful hypothesis of being half-Jewish by trying to persuade himself, and a few others, that he is the son of Bruno Schulz. But Jewish identity is scarcely at issue here except as a particularly acute instance of the collective European memory of the traumatic war years: "His head was full of Europe—all those obscure languages in all those shadowy places where there had been all those shootings—in the streets, in the forests." The real substance of Lars's obsession with Bruno Schulz is the power of literature to dominate reality, to displace it, to call into question reality's seemingly self-evident authority. Lars more than once invokes a line from Schulz, "Reality is as thin as paper and betrays with all its cracks its intuitive character"; and he wonders whether a man can be fathered by a piece of paper. For without the patrimony of Schulz, is he anyone at all, cubicled as he is in his little hole of an apartment, with scarcely any real human attachments, eking out a book-parasite's meager living from reviews—mostly of Writers from the Other Europe—which readers resolutely ignore?

The frail structure of Lars's effort of self-invention is badly shaken when a worn-looking woman, about his own age, in a white beret, abruptly appears, claiming that she is Bruno Schulz's illegitimate daughter and that the bag full of hand-scrawled pages she clutches is the manuscript of his lost novel, *The Messiah*. Since Miss Ozick's most admirable technical accomplishment here is the way she deftly spins out a mystery plot from these ambiguous literary circumstances, leading the reader through a chain of reversals and surprises, I will reveal only that the collision with a competitor for the Schulz legacy catapults Lars into a new relation to literature, to the past, and to the conditions of his everyday existence.

A good many reviewers have taken Cynthia Ozick at her word and have celebrated *The Messiah of Stockholm* as a major achievement. To me the novel never seems fully convincing, for all the interest of its informing idea, because, like a good deal of Miss Ozick's fiction, it is finally too cerebral. Lars is more concept than character, with a literary lineage going back to Dostoevsky's Underground Man, but he has only the sketchy outline of a personal history, and precious little in the way of psychological density or individual language. The figures around him work well enough as counters in a plot but the vividness of their surface mannerisms cannot altogether camouflage their abstractness. To put this another way, the novel is notable in the rendering of sensations but lacks the resonance of real experience beneath the level of sensation.

This cluster of deficiencies is, I think, most readily detected in Cynthia Ozick's style. Let me first say that at her best she is one of the most gifted stylists now writing in this country. For the most part, her best means her literary essays, where she exhibits the most remarkable ability to strike the enlivening phrase, to catch the nuance and paradox and suggestiveness of ideas by framing just the right words for them, often in unexpected combinations. Too frequently in her fiction, however, and especially in this latest novel, a mechanism (perhaps unconscious) is set into operation that seeks to compensate for the thinness of novelistic imagination by sheer force of stylistic razzle-dazzle.

The result is a prose that is often mannered, overwritten, oddly violent in excess of the objects of representation. (An unanticipated analogy with the prose of John Updike suggests itself here.) An autumnal sun about to set is "an eggshell shielding a blue-black yolk." Bruno Schulz is "a gargoyle on the flank of Drohobycz, a mole on its inmost sinew." As metaphors proliferate in this manner, images of combustion and destruction multiply. Writing a review at top speed, Lars is "a furnace burning fat . . . as if his pen, spattering along the line of rapid letters it ignited, flung out haloes of hot grease." Though it is in a sense true that Lars is looking for the dead in turning over the pages of Bruno Schulz's books, we may begin to squirm when we are told that "He had washed his fingers in that half-familiar dread print like a butcher with a bloody sheep in his grip, or like a tug dragging a river for a body." Once Lars is thrown into a series of fits by the intrusion of the self-proclaimed daughter of Bruno Schulz, this use of wild hyperbole knows no limits: "Lars . . . stared as if his own eyeballs were two breathing bellows inflated by the bottommost power of his pumping lungs." Again, contemplating the supposed manuscript of *The Messiah*, he "felt his own ordinary pupil consumed by a conflagration in the socket. As if copulating with an angel whose wings were on fire."

There is, of course, a high order of inventiveness in many of these images, as well as some attempt to give the images thematic anchorage, but the violent extravagance of the metaphors—flaming or bursting eyeballs, and elsewhere, a plethora of vomiting, slashing, gashing, gouging, battering, in the figurative language—betrays an attempt to substitute rhetorical intensity for experiential depth. Good novelists ought to be good

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stylists, but "fine writing" in the end cannot serve in place of novelistic imagination.

It may be that this problem is especially palpable in *The Messiah of Stockholm* because of the oddly general and international nature of the characters and situation. I would not for a moment suggest that a Jewish writer needs to write about Jewish subjects, but it is peculiar that so much of what Cynthia Ozick cares about most deeply, not to speak of what she knows most intimately, is excluded from this book: the Jewish people as the bearer of a distinctive history; Judaism with its uncompromising monotheistic imperatives; Israel as a radical new possibility in the Jewish relation to history; the urban intellectual Jews of the American Northeast. The only tenuous links with what she has repeatedly stated elsewhere as her compelling concerns are the wraithlike figure of Bruno Schulz, ostensibly associated with the Holocaust but here figuring more as archetypal literary predecessor, and a brief apocalyptic fantasy about idols that is presented as the content of the supposed Schulz manuscript. But even in regard to Schulz and his novel, one feels that *The Messiah of Stockholm* is rooted not in experience but in reading and cogitation about reading.

IN ALL these respects, Philip Roth's *The Counterlife* provides an instructive study in contrasts. It is, I believe, Roth's best book to date, which may seem a little improbable if one considers that it is a sequel to *The Anatomy Lesson*, the disastrous concluding novel of his Zuckerman trilogy. The center of interest in the new book is the relationship between novelist Nathan and his younger brother Henry, a prosperous dentist and family man in suburban New Jersey. Roth explores the bifurcating life choices of the two Zuckermans by having each of them live out the same two alternative destinies: thus, the novel's five long chapters constitute not a linear plot but a total of four different fictional hypotheses about the two protagonists.

In the first chapter Henry, afflicted by a cardiac disorder, is confronted with the decision of living permanently on a medication that causes complete impotence or undergoing very risky surgery to correct the condition. Since, as it now emerges, respectable Henry has been keeping a *shiksa* on the side, enjoying a clandestine Portnoyism as the escape hatch from the prison of bourgeois propriety, he chooses the operation—and dies under the knife. The next chapter gives us a Henry who has survived the operation but could hardly be said to be enjoying his restored virility. A post-operative depression leads him to move to Israel, where, having rejected the snares of opulent assimilation back home, he changes his name to Hanoch, straps a pistol around his waist, joins a West Bank settlement, and becomes the disciple of a charismatic Gush Emunim rabbi named Lippman. In the last two sections of the novel, Nathan moves from narrator to protagonist, and we soon realize that in the previous chapters he has been writing his own destiny over the surface of Henry's life: it is he who is now confronted with the choice between impotence and the risk of death, perishing in one version—logically, it is the authoritative one, but here all fictional hypotheses have their equal day in court—and in the other version, writing himself a future of survival and progeny with his fourth Christian wife, in anti-Semitically genteel England.

Any account of the four sets of fictional possibilities that constitute *The Counterlife* will make it sound chiefly like a piece of intricate ingenuity, the very quality one feels in the literary mystery plot of *The Messiah of Stockholm*. In fact, what is most striking about the Roth novel is the sense it repeatedly conveys of experience shrewdly observed and deeply felt. This is, of course, especially palpable in the representation of the Jewish middle-class family and the background of growing up in New Jersey in the 1940's. The ways of life of the two brothers, pre- and post-operative, diverge to the point of mutual estrangement, and yet there persists a residue of fraternal love, a shared childhood. At the funeral in the first chapter, Nathan remembers how his kid brother once went sleepwaking into the street, still wanting to trick or treat in his dreams—"But now he was in his coffin, the sleepwalking boy." It is a moment of persuasive pathos, produced with affecting simplicity not by any rhetorical maneuver but by the novelist's concrete imagination of a situation (both the present and the remembered one) and by his insight into a relationship.

WHAT is remarkable is that the section of the novel set in Israel, a place that earlier in Roth's work had been accorded only a peripheral and unconvincing role in *Portnoy's Complaint*, should be equally marked by close observation and persuasive feeling. The style, with its colloquial ease and vigor, rarely calls attention to itself, and figurative language is used not to evoke an otherwise absent intensity but to catch the precise nuance of what is being observed. Thus, Nathan looks over a young Hasid, in satin coat and black velvet hat, who invites him to join a *minyan* at the Western Wall:

> His pallor was alarming, however, a skin tone a breath away from the morgue. The elongated fingers with which he was tapping my shoulder suggested something erotically creepy at one extreme and excruciatingly delicate at the other, the hand of the helpless maiden *and* of the lurid ghoul.

Roth, or rather Nathan as narrator, is just as keen in his perception of the harsh, pitiless Judean landscape, which "could have passed for a piece of the moon to which the Jews had been sadistically exiled by their worst enemies" and was, for that very paradoxical reason, a place where "one might well imagine self-renewal on the grandest scale of all, the legendary scale, the scale of mythic heroism."

As even this brief quotation may suggest, Roth's Nathan catches not only the look of things in Israel but also the special tenor of political imagination and sentiment projected into and out of this landscape. The "Judea" section of the novel turns into a long ideological debate between Nathan and Henry, and Nathan and the formidable Rabbi Lippman, arguing for religious annexationism *à la* Gush

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Emunim, and it is informed by a sense of Israel as a distinctive ambience for debate of this sort. "I wasn't exactly a stranger to disputation," Nathan confesses, "but never in my life had I felt so enclosed by a world so contentious, where the argument is enormous and constant and everything turns out to be pro or con, positions taken, positions argued, and everything italicized by indignation and rage." The wit of the metaphor drawn from typography is revelatory: the image is right for Nathan, a writer by trade, and it aptly defines the peculiar quality of superemphasis of Israeli poltical discourse, as anyone will recognize who has sat in a living room in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv and participated in a discussion about the territories, the Diaspora, the role of religion in the state, or any of the other permanent crises that constitute Israeli life.

It may sound puzzling that all this intense engagement with what deserves to be called, without apology, reality should occur in a novel constructed out of the playing of one fictional hypothesis against another. In point of fact, the self-conscious fictionality of *The Counterlife* proves to be the perfect vehicle for confronting the question of what it means to be a Jew, given the ambiguous burdens of Jewish history at this particular moment of the late 20th century. Roth has no answers but he recognizes that the dimensions of the question can be seen only by following out a collision course of opposing ideas. Assimilation has its allure but in the end it does not quite work, not even for Nathan with his four Christian wives, who retreats from the idyll of "Christendom" (the title of the last chapter of the novel) to a perception of the need to reject all idyllic visions, to cling to a Jewish sense of being wounded, alienated, by history, community, and faith. The return to Zion also does not quite work, at least not as an act of radical self-transformation, but the argument for it is given a powerful voice.

All this is to say that the structure of the novel is essentially dialectical. At this point in time, after genocide and statehood and the fullest invitation to assimilation of any diaspora in history, it is not easy to imagine what a Jew might be, and *The Counterlife* is constructed both within the chapters and from chapter to chapter, as a clash of imaginations of the Jewish self in which no single viewpoint is allowed to cancel out the others. Some moments may be less convincing than others—the one real lapse is an attempted skyjacking episode in which an Israeli counter-terrorist delivers himself of a harangue on Jewish history—but the writer does not load the dice ideologically. Nathan, listening to Rabbi Lippman, admits to himself that his adversary's "tirades have an eerie reality" and wonders whether such views seem repugnant "because what he says is wrong or because what he says is just unsayable." He feels himself in the presence of a "terrifying imagination richer with reality" than his own. This leads him to an observation that precisely states the link between the self-reflexive fictional form and the investigation of the Jewish self at the heart of *The Counterlife*: "The treacherous imagination is everybody's maker —we are all the invention of each other, everybody a conjuration conjuring up everyone else. We are all each other's authors."

As this perception is worked out in the structure of the novel, Nathan is Henry's author but Henry then reappears liberated from the bonds of authorial subjugation and if not Nathan's author at least his executor, while we are left puzzling over the nature of the inferrable author or authority that presides over both brothers. The novel also makes clear that there are imaginations more or less rich in reality. Portnoyism, which appears here in different guises in the lives of each of the two brothers, is definitively transcended because it is seen to betray in the end a real lack of imagination. The author behind the fictional authors within the novel clearly rejects the Gush Emunim alternative but does not dismiss the authority of the historical imagination behind it. The more solitary Jewish way articulated (posthumously) by the Nathan of the last section is precarious, ambiguous, perhaps too purely symbolic, but it has its own imaginative force—a force that flows largely from the willingness to look unflinchingly both at personal and collective history. Nathan remains a thoroughly literary man to the end, but literature alone would not suffice to nurture his imagination, and surely not a literary idea like building an identity through the obsessive attachment to the life and work of a dead writer. The dedication of the novel to Philip Roth's father in his eighty-fifth year is in the end more than just a personal gesture because *The Counterlife* is a serious if idiosyncratic affirmation of connection with a people and its past.

In the 60's, during the great vogue of American Jewish fiction, it seemed to me somehow suspect that writers celebrated by many at the time as harbingers of an American Jewish cultural renaissance, should so regularly imagine a world in which Israel was scarcely even a presence on a distant horizon. It was not that serious American Jewish writers should have been obliged to be Zionists or to produce highbrow versions of *Exodus* but only that the creation of Israel represented a fundamental alteration in the facts of Jewish existence, so that a fiction that simply ignored the momentous challenge of renewed Jewish autonomy could scarcely be thought to probe the problematic of modern Jewish identity. Israel stands, of course, as a triumphant solution to a "question" that ended in the murder of six million Jews. It is also, as we know every time we open a newspaper, a constant source of trouble, ambivalence, and self-questioning as well as pride to all who choose to see themselves as Jews, whether within Israel itself or anywhere in the Diaspora.

Philip Roth's ability to imagine Israel in depth as an inexorable component of the Jewish struggle for identity is what gives his latest book the unusual resonance it possesses. In Cynthia Ozick's new novel, on the other hand, the absence of either Israel or of a persuasive sense of real history is a symptom of the narrow limits of the merely literary notions within which her fiction is enacted.

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Paradox in War

STRATEGY: THE LOGIC OF WAR AND PEACE. By EDWARD N. LUTTWAK. *Harvard University Press. 283 pp. $20.00.*

Reviewed by ELIOT A. COHEN

AMONG civilian defense analysts, Edward Luttwak has no peer. In part this is because he is quite inimitable. Educated in Sicily, England, Israel, and the United States, fluent in half-a-dozen languages, he has written, among other things, a practical guide to the conduct of *coups d'état*; a history of the Israel Defense Forces; a volume on military technology; and a learned treatise on the grand strategy of the Roman empire which was well-received even by peaceable classicists who did not know quite what to make of this irruption from the world of Washington consultants. In that latter capacity, Luttwak has played a greater or lesser role in shaping government views on such matters as counter-insurgency and reform of the Joint Chiefs of Staff system. As a periodical writer (notably in COMMENTARY), he has helped shape the public understanding of how well or, more often, how poorly the American defense establishment has performed.

Unpredictable as ever, Luttwak has now published a book quite unlike any of those mentioned above and several others unmentioned. *Strategy* is at once an amazingly ambitious and an oddly modest book, an attempt to lay out a complete theory of its subject while remaining diffident about its implications for policy. Indeed, in one of the book's most interesting chapters Luttwak asks, quite sincerely, "Is strategy useful?" and gives a number of reasons why we might think it is not. Although he cites a contemporary problem—the defense of NATO's central front—to illustrate his conception of strategy, he does so for heuristic purposes only. *Strategy* is an exercise in theory, not a policy critique.

In his preface Luttwak reveals that the book is the product of a long and tortuous set of reflections which he has found it difficult to render in satisfactory form. Indeed, *Strategy* shows little of the sardonic humor or confident pugnacity which many readers have come to associate with Luttwak; its tone is profoundly sober, and occasional infelicities of style suggest that this work trickled rather than flowed from the pen. Yet precisely these same qualities make it perhaps more intriguing and thought-provoking than some of Luttwak's earlier works and, one suspects, may make it more durable as well.

Two themes animate the entire book. The first, and most novel, is what Luttwak refers to as the paradoxical logic that governs all of strategy, a kind of inverted reasoning which pervades all warlike activities and which contrasts sharply with what he calls "linear logic," that is, common sense. In the topsy-turvy world of strategy, to be too strong is to be weak, to succeed is to pave the way for failure, to take the most direct path is to ensure the longest and costliest journey. For example, common sense might dictate that the best way to defend a country is by ranging forces along its borders, thereby preventing an enemy from ravaging the lands which lie beyond. In point of fact, however, defense in depth, allowing an enemy to penetrate unprotected settled areas, may prove the best way of defeating him by sudden counterattack; deliberately to make oneself vulnerable is thus to make oneself strong.

The paradox applies even to weapons: a device which is extremely useful early in a conflict soon becomes useless and ultimately dangerous. As an example, Luttwak points to the rearward-looking radar developed by the British for their bombers in World War II. Initially this radar warned pilots of the approach of German fighters; then the Germans jammed it; then German night fighters learned how to home in on the radar, completely defeating the purpose for which it had been invented.

The central cause of this paradoxical logic—and I have not done justice to the imaginative and wide range of historical examples Luttwak invokes to illustrate it—is the fact that in war one deals with an opponent who reacts. War is most emphatically *not* like building a bridge over a treacherous river. Dangerous as that latter enterprise might be, a river does not consciously devise novel means to wash away abutments, drown construction workers, and generally thwart the engineer.

Alas, suggests Luttwak, democratic states have particular difficulty in adjusting to the paradoxical logic of strategy, because so much of their daily life is governed by linear logic. In his view, this accounts for the well-intentioned but thoroughly wrong-headed proclivities of earnest systems analysts, well-meaning bureaucrats, and zealous Congressmen who dabble in the study of security. By contrast, the Hegelian dialectic of Marxism-Leninism makes strategic thinking easier for our opponents.

Luttwak's second theme concerns the five levels of strategy: technology, tactics, operations, theater strategy, and grand strategy. Any military problem must be examined at all five levels, because success at one level does not necessarily translate into effectiveness at another. Thus, a guided antitank missile can be negated by tactical responses (e.g., use of artillery to suppress the missile's operators or

ELIOT A. COHEN, *the author of* Citizens and Soldiers, *teaches in the Strategy Department of the U.S. Naval War College. The views expressed here are his own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Naval War College or any other government agency.*

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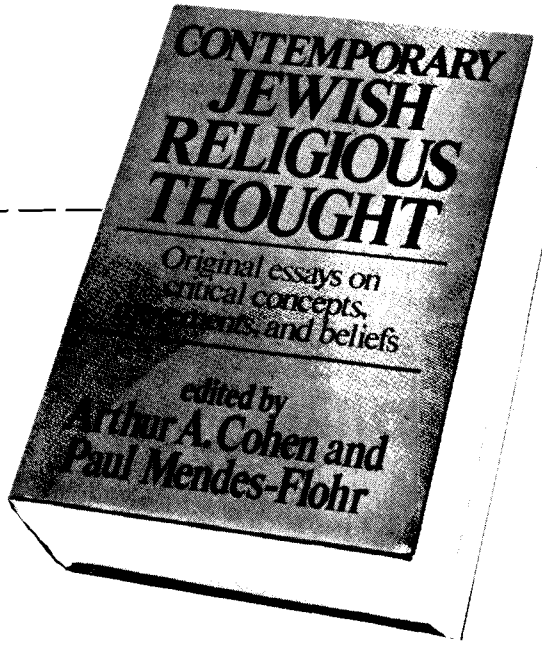

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smoke to blind them) or operational ones (concentration of an attack along a single axis of advance). Since the paradoxical logic of war operates at all five levels, and since these levels continuously interact with one another, we are left with a terribly difficult intellectual problem. As Luttwak himself puts it:

> We can no longer visualize strategy only in its horizontal dimension, as an agitated sea in which the waves and counterwaves of the paradoxical logic tend to nullify one another, in a perpetual striving for an impossible equilibrium. Nor can we see strategy as a multilevel edifice, offering a different truth on every floor. We must instead contend with the complexity of combining both images in our minds: the floors are no longer solid but in agitated motion, sometimes to the point of breaking into one another, just as in the dynamic reality of conflict the interactions of the vertical levels themselves combine and collide with the entire horizontal dimension of strategy.

A convoluted description, perhaps, but no more so than the reality it seeks to describe.

LUTTWAK freely concedes the very large intellectual debt he owes to Carl von Clausewitz, whose masterpiece *On War* remains to this day the greatest book on the theory of war. In particular, he builds on the understanding of the relations among levels of conflict which Clausewitz advanced, and he pushes further Clausewitz's emphasis on the importance of interaction as the key to understanding war. In some important ways, however, Luttwak departs from Clausewitz's teaching, and concerning nothing is this more true than the role of politics in war.

"Grand strategy," Luttwak writes, "also exists outside international politics, for it comprehends the highest level of interaction between any parties capable of using unregulated force against one another." (To illustrate the point, he concocts a story of two thugs in a night fight in a dark alley.) Clausewitz's view was rather different: war is a unique form of struggle *because* of its political character, and politics is an affair of states. In contrast to Luttwak and others, Clausewitz held that the theory which governs war is different in some respect from that which governs games of conflict (like chess). Moreover, it follows from this that the highest level—call it strategy or grand strategy—must dominate all the others. Where Luttwak gives the title "Outcomes" to the part of his book dealing with grand strategy, Clausewitz would probably call it "First Principles," and place it (as in fact he did) at the beginning rather than the end.

Luttwak's departure from Clausewitz may seem more dramatic than perhaps it really is, for he tacitly acknowledges the preeminence of grand strategy, and he is nothing if not politically astute. Nonetheless, the difference is real. It is evident also in his development of the notion of the paradoxical logic of strategy, a theme not entirely foreign to Clausewitz, but hardly at the center of his thought. Clausewitz's work is characterized by a deep appreciation of the value of common sense and a mistrust of that brand of cleverness which seeks to evade the realities of war in a vain search for magical formulas. Moreover, reflection on military history suggests that some of the greatest commanders and armies have concentrated directly on the fundamentals of a problem and solved them in a very commonsensical way—Ulysses S. Grant is a case in point, the Israel Defense Forces another.

Luttwak is at pains to point out that conscious use of the paradoxical logic of war, or what he calls "relational maneuver," is not the same thing as mere cleverness or an aptitude for stratagem. He also cogently observes that every ruse in war—including surprise and deception—carries very real costs. Nonetheless, by insisting as forcefully and persuasively as he does on the dominance of paradox in war, he runs the risk of rendering the whole subject even more mystifying than it need be. There is a danger, indeed, that a careless reader may become so enamored of standing sense on its head that he will fail to see the reasoning which undergirds Luttwak's analysis.

But even if one cannot fully accept Edward Luttwak's arguments in this book, such disagreement in no way detracts from its merit. It is a subtle work, counterintuitive without being perverse, heterodox without being outrageous. It is a book which will still be read years from now, not because of the author's celebrity but because of the many insights it contains and the hard thinking it will assuredly provoke.

Attacking AIPAC

THE LOBBY: JEWISH POLITICAL POWER AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. By EDWARD TIVNAN. *Simon & Schuster. 304 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

EDWARD TIVNAN believes that a principal obstacle to peace in the Middle East—perhaps *the* principal obstacle—is Israeli intransigence. That intransigence, in his view, is encouraged by American Jews who lobby on Israel's behalf irrespective of its policies. Their lobbying agency is a "neoconservative" group called AIPAC—the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. It has come to dominate the Jewish community because Israel has become "the religion" of American Jews. Not only does it dominate the Jewish community, but AIPAC also wields "phenomenal" power in American politics as a whole, because, says Tivnan, "few ambitious American politicians could even dream of higher office without the prospect of Jewish money."

According to Tivnan, campaign contributions by Jews and AIPAC's activities are all part of the same thing—"the lobby"—even though AIPAC itself cannot legally and does not donate to campaigns. The lobby is in turn dominated by businessmen who are motivated less by

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JOSHUA MURAVCHIK, *a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of* The Uncertain Crusade: Jimmy Carter and the Dilemmas of Human Rights Policy. *His article, "Sandinista Anti-Semitism and Its Apologists" (written with Susan Alberts and Antony Korenstein), appeared in our September 1986 issue.*

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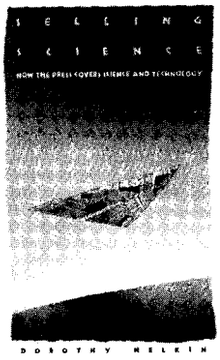

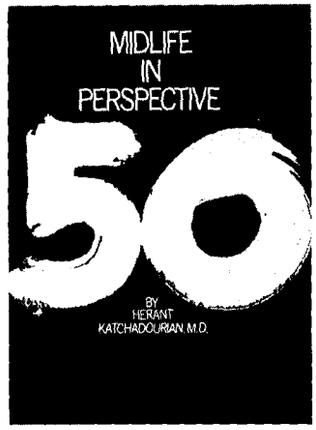

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their concern for Israel's well-being than by their thirst for power. If American Jews do not put a stop to all this, they will be sorry, cautions Tivnan, who is not Jewish. Not only will peace elude the Middle East, but a groundswell of anti-Semitism will continue to gather in the United States. "Resentment against Jewish power is already festering in Washington," he warns.

Tivnan had better hope so, for it is hard to see who besides the resentful will provide an audience for this book. The relations between Israel and American Jewry, the role of Jews in American politics, and the dynamics within the American Jewish community are all fair subjects for scrutiny. But Tivnan's account is so fevered, so riddled with errors of both methodology and substance, so driven by animus, as to render his book useless except to those similarly tormented.

Tivnan's thumbnail sketch of Middle East history emphasizes Israeli culpability at every turn. Thus, to take one example out of many, not long after the 1949 armistice ending Israel's War of Independence, Israel's leaders, says Tivnan, began to plot a new war against the Arabs. Egypt's new President, Gamal Abdel Nasser, repeatedly confided to American and British officials "that he was eager for peace with Israel." But he was thwarted by "a grand plan that had been hatched . . . by Ben-Gurion and his lieutenants to push the Arabs into a war they could never win." Ben-Gurion's method was to sponsor what Tivnan calls "Israeli 'reprisals,'" the true aim of which was "apparent[ly] . . . to keep the border areas in turmoil and increase the appearance of threats to [Israel's] own security." These efforts climaxed with Israel's conquest of the Suez in 1956.

Tivnan's account omits Nasser's 1951 closing of the Suez Canal to Israeli shipping in violation of international law, his similarly illegal blockade of the Strait of Tiran, the all-too-real campaign of *fedayeen* terror that he sponsored against Israel, and the bellicose rhetoric that accompanied all of this.

Again in 1967, Nasser did not want war, explains Tivnan, and "there was no real threat to the existence of Israel," but the series of steps that Nasser took frightened Israelis. President "Johnson tried to calm the Israelis and win political support for the opening of the Strait. But on June 5, 1967, Israeli planes bombarded Egyptian airfields, and thus took the offensive against the might of the entire Arab world."

There is some truth to this account, but as always with Tivnan, some distortion and some omission as well. What is missing is that Johnson's efforts to win support for international action to open the Strait *failed*—the other powers balked at becoming involved. Missing, too, is any mention of the limits on Israel's ability to sustain a full alert of its citizen-army in the face of Egypt's mobilization in the Sinai. As the days of international inaction turned into weeks, Israel concluded it could wait no longer, but contrary to Tivnan, it did not take the offensive against "the entire Arab world." It struck against Egypt, at the same time sending urgent diplomatic messages to Jordan through U.S. intermediaries pledging not to attack Jordan if Hussein refrained from attacking Israel. But, as Hussein has subsequently recounted, he was manipulated by Nasser and he did attack, a misstep without which the West Bank and East Jerusalem—today the focus of so much anguish—would still be in Arab hands.

TIVNAN's harsh view of Israel's history is matched by his opinions about Israel today. Israel, he says, has been "a foreign-aid junkie [since] a very early age." "One might even say that the U.S. owns Israel," he snickers, and adds, its "major industry seem[s] to be tax evasion." Nor is Tivnan much more charitable in his discussions of American Jews. He summarizes his own judgment by quoting an anonymous "Jewish professional": "Today's Jewish leaders are dwarfs. . . . Jewish politics these days has been reduced to 'photocracy.' . . ." But these dwarfs are also terrifyingly powerful. Tivnan quotes another anonymous source as saying that "No one can run for national office without Jewish support," and he buttresses this by reporting that "pro-Israel PACs [political action committees] in 1984 contributed nearly $3.6 million" to federal candidates.

Tivnan scupulously avoids mentioning the only figures that would allow any honest assessment of the weight of these PACs—namely, how their contributions compare with those of other PACs—although such figures must have been available to him from whatever source provided his statistic for the pro-Israel PACs. According to the Federal Election Commission, all PACs gave $113 million to federal candidates in the 1984 election. Thus the pro-Israel PACs Tivnan cites accounted for 3.2 percent, and only one of them made its way onto the FEC's list of the fifty largest PAC donors in 1984.

Tivnan suggests that Jewish political activity constitutes a threat to American democracy. He claims that "American Jewish leaders stifled dissent, and questioned the motives of anyone who dared criticize Israel, Jew, Gentile, or President of the United States." At another point he writes, "AIPAC was smothering the kind of debate that is supposed to fuel American democracy." And at still another he asserts (without offering a single example or shred of evidence) that U.S. university faculties are "appalled by the lobby's efforts to crush academic freedom."

Sometimes one hears in Tivnan's voice faint doubts about the Americanness of American Jews. Extolling the publication in 1966 of an obscure anti-Zionist book, Tivnan declares: "This kind of reassessment marked a maturity in American Jews as Americans and as Jews." That Tivnan should purport to measure the "maturity" of Jews as Jews is merely ridiculous, but that he presumes to judge their "maturity" as Americans is somewhat nastier, as is his reference to frictions "in U.S.-Jewish relations." Are Jews not part of the U.S.?

TIVNAN may be entitled to his opinions and his dislikes, but he is less entitled to his methodology. Although the jacket blurb observes

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that Tivnan holds a Ph.D., his work does not purport to be scholarly. Neither does it measure up to the standards of journalism. Anti-Zionist views attributed to President Roosevelt, criticisms of Jewish leaders attributed to President Truman, and lots of other provocative things are offered without a hint of a source. In more than fifty places the text is footnoted, "Confidential interview." This is a practice that would warrant little credence even in a writer careful with facts. But Tivnan is not such a writer.

I was able to trace one of his confidential sources to its origin. Tivnan heaps praise on Jews who criticize Israel; one he cites often is Philip Klutznick, formerly the president of the World Jewish Congress. During the 1982 war in Lebanon, Klutznick wrote an op-ed article. As a result, according to Tivnan, "Once again Klutznick became a target of abuse; an editor of AIPAC's *Near East Report* had to be restrained from branding [him] a 'Nazi.'"

Even had Tivnan gotten this story straight, his report would be absurd: what does it matter what someone was restrained from saying? But he did not get the story straight. The editor in question was Moshe Decter, and the person who "restrained" him, and who also turns out to have been Tivnan's "confidential" source, was assistant editor David Silverberg. In an exchange of memos that Silverberg has preserved, he persuaded Decter to tone down his criticisms of Klutznick. Decter's draft had charged Klutznick with having likened the Israelis in Lebanon to Nazis; Silverberg pointed out that Klutznick had merely quoted such accusations, leaving it ambiguous whether he himself endorsed them. In any case, however, all this is rather a different matter from Decter's having called Klutznick a Nazi. How many of Tivnan's other anonymous stories are similarly garbled?

TIVNAN also relies heavily on secondary and tertiary sources, both for written material and for accounts of conversations. In the latter case the sources are often anonymous and rarely corroborated. When a second- or third-hand account furnished Tivnan with something he wanted to use, he seems to have deliberately avoided checking with the primary source, even where it was readily available, lest the story be denied. Thus he asserts (without naming any sources) that AIPAC's former director Morris Amitay "threaten[ed] to shut off Jewish campaign funds [to members of Congress who] didn't vote AIPAC's way," and that on another occasion Amitay pledged retaliation against Senator George McGovern. Tivnan does not mention that according to Amitay both these stories are wholly false, although elsewhere in the book he claims to have interviewed Amitay.

Similarly, Tivnan reports that former President Ford, lobbying on behalf of President Reagan's 1981 Awacs sale to Saudi Arabia, asked a Republican Senator: "Are we going to let the fucking Jews run American foreign policy?" Ford vociferously denies saying this, and asserts that Tivnan never asked him about it. Nor does Tivnan claim to have asked him; Tivnan's footnote attributes the quotation merely to a "confidential interview." In the page proofs originally circulated to reviewers, the same footnote cited an unnamed dinner partner of the Senator as the source of the story, and then added: "story confirmed by Senator (tk)." The notation "tk" is publishing shorthand for something still to be filled in. Apparently Tivnan tried and failed to get the Senator to confirm the story; when the book went to press he used the quotation anyway, but shortened the footnote.

Elsewhere Tivnan cites Senator Edward Kennedy complaining at some length about having been "beat[en] over the head" by AIPAC to get him to sign a letter in 1975 in which 76 Senators protested against President Ford's an-

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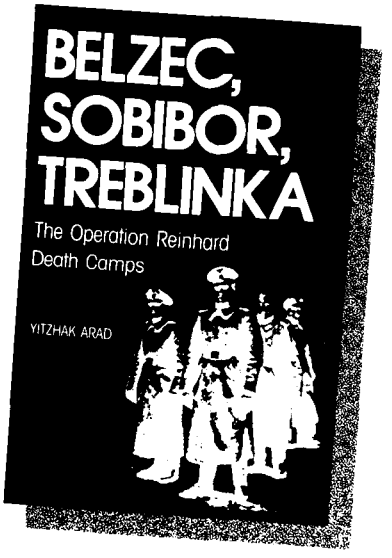

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nounced "reassessment" of U.S. Middle East policy (generally understood as a device to pressure Israel). Tivnan names Senator James Abourezk, a militant advocate of the Arab cause, as his source. Kennedy asserts he has "no memory of having said any such thing," and his staff points out that the attributed statement is contrary to Kennedy's long-held views on the Middle East. As with Amitay and Ford, Tivnan never asked Kennedy about the accuracy of the quotation.

TIVNAN'S most arresting use of a secondhand source concerns the late Moshe Sharett, who served as Israel's Prime Minister from 1953 to 1955. Sharett was more dovish than Ben-Gurion and others of his colleagues, and he confided some of their internal quarrels to his diary, which was published posthumously in Israel a few years ago. Tivnan writes that "Sharett's diary is a blockbuster, belying most of the conventional wisdom about the Arab threat to Israel's security during those early years," and he quotes from it a half-dozen times.

The problem is that Tivnan does not draw directly from the diaries but from excerpts translated in a 73-page pamphlet entitled *Israel's Sacred Terrorism*; this pamphlet, published by the Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG), was written by one Livia Rokach, "an Italian writer and journalist of Palestinian origin" (according to the pamphlet). Something of Rokach's perspective on her subject is revealed in her preface where she writes that Sharett "lucidly perceived as fascist the logic behind Israel's security doctrine. . . . The liquidation of his dissenting presence was considered indispensable to the realization of the Israeli political/military leadership's megalomaniac and criminal designs."

The AAUG notes in an introduction that the portion of Sharett's diary excerpted by Rokach "amounts to no more than one percent of the whole" and that her "study utilizes excerpts from the Sharett diary to reinforce and illustrate her own thesis." In this light, most journalists, not to say scholars, would find reason to pause before relying on such a work as a source for Sharett's opinion. Tivnan not only relies on it, but embellishes it where he finds it insufficiently condemnatory of Israel. Thus, where Rokach reports that "Sharett noted an episode of 'the worst type,'" Tivnan borrows this and improves on it, writing: "Sharett was scribbling in his diary about Israeli terrorism of 'the worst type.'" (Throughout the book, Tivnan refers frequently to Jewish terrorism and Israeli terrorism, never using quotation marks, but when he comes to mention the famous 1985 hijacking of a TWA jetliner, he refers to the hijacker/murderers as Shiite "terrorists.")

HIS unprofessional use of sources is compounded by the fact that Tivnan came to his subject with little prior knowledge and seems to have learned only enough to furnish grist for his polemic. As a result, he occasionally lapses into assertions that are downright absurd—for example, when he writes that Israel's "failure to consider Palestinian rights" has "cut off Jewish organizations" from, among others, the American labor movement. Everyone who knows anything about this subject knows that the AFL-CIO remains Israel's staunchest friend outside of the organized Jewish community.

But Tivnan also draws on a handful of authoritative writers, notably Howard M. Sachar and Walter Laqueur, to construct a scaffolding of historical facts on which to drape his argument. In numerous places, indeed, his text seems merely a hasty rewrite of passages from their works. He seems particularly pleased to be able to cite them for facts that purportedly show Israel or Jews in a poor light, while omitting whatever balancing material might have been in the original or adding his own edge to the story. The result sometimes might be called plagiarism with embellishments.

For example, Tivnan writes of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the leader of Revisionist Zionism:

> Jabotinsky . . . was not comfortable with the murder of Arab women and children; he implored the Irgun commanders to give fair warning so that the Arabs could evacuate the areas under attack. The leaders contended that such warnings could not be given without endangering the lives of the attackers, and thus the success of the terrorist operations.

He cites Laqueur's *History of Zionism* as his source, and there we find:

> Jabotinsky was unhappy about the murder of Arab women and children and asked the Irgun leaders to warn the Arabs in time for them to evacuate the areas that were to be attacked. The Irgun commanders replied that such warnings could not be given without endangering the success of the attacks and the lives of those engaged in them.

In contrast to Laqueur, however, who describes the Arab attacks on Jews for which the missions discussed here were retaliations, Tivnan spares his readers such details, merely borrowing Laqueur's passage and adding the word "terrorist" to give it a different slant.

CITING Laqueur and Sachar is part of a broader tactic. Tivnan argues that "maybe the most powerful" weapon of Jewish political power in America is the ability to brand those who disagree with Israel's current policies "anti-Semitic." To blunt this weapon, Tivnan decks himself in Jews. He notes in his introduction that he got the idea for the book from a friend named Schwartz; the book jacket carries two blurbs—one by the journalist Carl Bernstein and the other by Leon Charney, the self-proclaimed "unsung hero" of the Camp David accords; Tivnan repeatedly quotes and praises such Jewish critics of Israel as Arthur Hertzberg and Israeli dissident sources like the magazine *New Outlook*; and he exhorts the Jewish silent majority to rally to the banner of such left-wing groups as Breira and New Jewish Agenda. But none of this can obscure the fact that Tivnan's book is a shoddy and odious piece of work, suffused with enmity for its twin subjects of Israel and the American Jewish community.

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Sex & Power

THE CARE OF THE SELF: VOLUME THREE OF THE HISTORY OF SEXUALITY. By MICHEL FOUCAULT. Translated by ROBERT HURLEY. *Pantheon. 279 pp. $18.95.*

FOUCAULT: A CRITICAL READER. Edited by DAVID COUZENS HOY. *Blackwell. 246 pp. $45.00.*

Reviewed by RICHARD T. MARIN

WHEN Michel Foucault died in 1984 at the age of fifty-seven, he had already established himself as France's reigning *maître à penser*, hailed on both sides of the intellectual waters as the next Marx, Nietzsche, and/or Freud. At the time of his death—from an illness believed to have been precipitated by AIDS—Foucault was halfway toward completing his longest and most ambitious work, the six-volume *History of Sexuality*. The third volume in the series, *The Care of the Self*, has just been published here, and like its predecessor, *The Use of Pleasure*, it is both an excavation and an exegesis of classical attitudes toward sex, the soul, and the love of young boys. As distant as Foucault's homosexuality was from his early work, so close is it to the heart of his last writings. His death, and the illness that caused it, give a sharp twist of biographical irony to the theme of sexual ethics that came to obsess his final years.

Born in Poitiers, France in 1926, Foucault had a brilliant scholarly career that culminated in a chair at the prestigious Collège de France. Although as a young man he flirted briefly with party Communism, he had long abandoned this allegiance by the time of the famous Paris student riots in May 1968, which he regarded from a cynical distance. In his early books, which he labeled a species of "archaeology"—*The Order of Things, Madness and Civilization, The Birth of the Clinic,* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*—Foucault traced an idiosyncratic history of ideas: madness in the age of reason, illness in the age of medical enlightenment. His intent, as the philosopher Richard Rorty put it in the *London Review of Books*, was to demonstrate "the radical contingency of the concepts used at a given time, the looseness of fit between what went on and what people said and did about it."

These ideas, with their echoes of structuralism, Kuhnian paradigms, and *Annales*-style history, gave Foucault's work a familiar ring, but it was the next phase of his writing that made his reputation. "I ask myself what else was it that I was talking about, in *Madness and Civilization* or *The Birth of the Clinic*, but power?" The remark, from *Power/Knowledge* (a collection of interviews and essays dating from 1972-77), marked the shift that put power at the head of Foucault's philosophical venture. This was not the traditional notion of power as repression, but a quasi-Clausewitzian vision of power—and more specifically the nexus of "power-knowledge"—as war. Foucault wanted to write a history of the present by digging up a Nietzschean genealogy of the past, in which the will to power would be seen equally as the will to truth.

Thus, in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault asked, why do "prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?" His answer: because we moderns live in a "disciplinary" society, by which he meant both the techniques of punishment we have devised to replace the grand spectacles of public flogging and execution *and* the social sciences (the "disciplines") that grew around these new techniques—psychology, sociology, criminology, and their countless cousins. In both these developments Foucault discerned the birth of modernity, the replacement of the juridical rule of law by the disciplinary law of "the norm" and "the calculated management of life."

RICHARD T. MARIN, *a new contributor, is an assistant editor of* Harper's.

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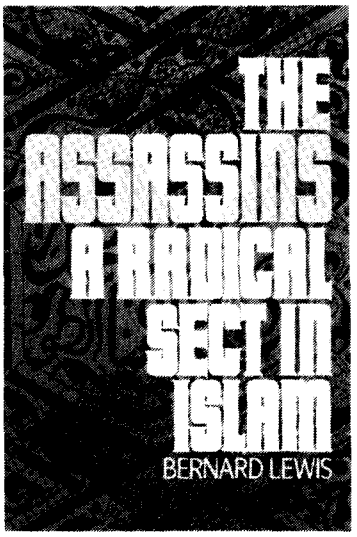

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Hence the centrality of sex to Foucault's power analysis—and the centrality of power to his understanding of sex. Why, he asks in *The History of Sexuality*, is sex so important to us, "more important than our soul, more important almost than our life?" Rejecting the traditional (psychoanalytical) explanation, he argues that the 20th century has been an era not of sexual liberation but of enslavement to the "norm." He points by contrast to the Greeks and Romans, for whom sex was just another "ethical problem," not the dark secret it was for the Victorians or the vital locus of personal well-being it has become in the late 20th century. In both *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*, Foucault lingers in great detail upon writings about sex in ancient Greece and Rome—from Socrates to more arcane texts such as Artemidorus's manual of dream interpretation—commenting approvingly on the manner in which the ancients discussed sex as a matter of not much greater importance than dietary practices.

The obscurity of the documents Foucault has chosen in *The Care of the Self* leads naturally to the question of how representative they are, and how relevant his hypothesis is to the history of everyday Greek and Roman life. (Although Foucault's scholarship is not our subject here, it has in general been subjected to severe criticism.) And what of the Greeks' predilection for, and the Romans' toleration of, pederasty? Foucault's answer is that the whole thing was properly seen by the ancients as a problem of self-mastery—hardly a convincing interpretation, although one that does shed some light on his own predilection for a decidedly amoral view of the moral life. Toward the end of his life Foucault staked a vague claim for a new "aesthetics of existence," at the center of which would be "the body and its pleasures" instead of traditional sex, which he called "boring." Like most of his ideas, this one was elliptical and quite unfinished.

Now it has fallen to Foucault's followers and detractors to scrap over the shards of his thought. David Couzens Hoy's *Foucault: A Critical Reader* is a good place to start. Hoy, a professor of philosophy at the University of California, originally meant his "critical reader" to be just that: a collection of essays by philosophers and social theorists hostile to Foucault's vision of the world. After Foucault's death, however, more "sympathetic" readings were included, and the result is, at least, a more representative sampling, since during his life and tours of this country Foucault was greeted by many more academic sycophants than critics.

Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, professors (respectively) of philosophy and anthropology at Berkeley, have long served as Foucault's American explicators and interlocutors. Their essay in the present collection glosses with evasive ease over the rough edges in their master's teaching:

> The tension between Foucault's preferences and his insight into the impossibility and undesirability of offering a theory justifying his action only seems a contradiction; this very tension provides the elements for a coherent method. . . .

And what might those elements be? On this point the two authors are not particularly clear. At any rate it would not, they assert, be an ethics grounded in religion, law, science, or philosophy, but rather in "imagination, lucidity, humor, disciplined thought, and practical wisdom." Certainly Foucault himself would have scorned this reading as too soft, too fearful of the knowledge-power nexus.

Equally uncritical has been Edward Said, who over the years has freely appropriated Foucault's ideas in an effort to enlist him in a "libertarian" defense of feminism, Palestine, and the Third World (while warning that we must not "indulge ourselves in the practice of saving Foucault from himself in order to make self-interested use of him"). Other leftists have been less enthusiastic. Thus, Michael Walzer, disturbed at once by Foucault's "infantile leftism" and by the "conservative implications of his thought," concludes that he is "importantly wrong" in his account of the modern world—important for "capturing something of the reality of contemporary society," wrong for failing to see the necessity of radical politics.

On the other hand, Richard Rorty, in an essay included here, mounts an essentially conservative attack on Foucault's anarchism, which he calls, in tones not altogether dissimilar to those of Michael Walzer, "self-indulgent radical chic." Rorty in particular assails the belief, common to Foucault and to the line of French intellectual thought associated with Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, that "ideological purity requires us to speak of texts rather than facts," a belief which produces "simple polemic against traditional notions," not "constructive theory." (Actually, protesting that Foucault does not supply a constructive theory is rather like chastising a Marxist for not being a better capitalist.)

Finally, Charles Taylor, a Hegelian scholar and socialist of mild conviction, argues with forceful thoroughness that Foucault's position is "ultimately incoherent" because it breaks its own rules. To Foucault, the idea of a liberating truth was a profound illusion, and yet, Taylor points out, Foucault himself sought a liberation of sorts —from the romantic ideology of repression—and this presupposes the existence of some "truth" at the end of the process of unmasking. "Mask and falsehood make no sense without a corresponding notion of truth," Taylor writes; nor does the wrongness of one spurious claim to truth (like Marxism) preclude the rightness of another. What, for instance, of civic humanism? As Taylor says, "Without this in one's conceptual armory, Western history and societies become incomprehensible, as they are for that reason to so many Russians (like Solzhenitsyn)."

In light of this last remark one better appreciates how lamentably appropriate is the enthusiastic nomination of Foucault, by the German social theorist Jürgen Habermas, as the philosophical figure who has "most lastingly in-

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fluenced the *Zeitgeist*." Foucault's work, with its championing of the obscure and the perverse, with its intense distrust of truth, of civic humanism, and of the comity of values necessary to a democratic society, has indeed exercised an influence on the *Zeitgeist*, as well as being an all too faithful reflection of it.

Thoughts of an Arabist

DESCENT TO SUEZ: FOREIGN OFFICE DIARIES 1951-56. By EVELYN SHUCKBURGH. *Norton. 380 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID PRYCE-JONES

OVER a long period prior to World War II the British Foreign Office was a principal institution in defense not of Britain alone but of the international order. Success against Nazism in the war should have strengthened the skills and morale required to deal with the spread of Communism in its aftermath, but in fact the Foreign Office proved virtually helpless, paralyzed by a strange new conviction that the breed of dictators rising abroad was indeed representative of their people and of their age, and therefore irresistible. Confronted by postwar nationalists of the Nasser and Nkrumah type, British diplomacy suddenly looked incompetent, rooted in illusion, or worse.

Of all the species of British diplomat, perhaps none had been so celebrated as the Arabist, the man who "understood" the Arabs and who on their behalf had fashioned federations and pacts, unity and independence. When, in the postwar period, these measures led to chaos, the Arabist passionately advocated more of them. It has never been clear quite how tradition, character, and chance combined to form these Arabists, but Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh's diaries—intended as a document for posterity, and much shortened for this first publication—give us a welcome and fascinating insight into the process.

Between 1954 and June 1956, Shuckburgh was head of the Middle East department of the Foreign Office. By his own frank account, he was a complete failure, brought by the job to the verge of nervous collapse. Where the Arabs were concerned, he sought ceaselessly on their behalf for fresh concessions, only to discover that no concession was ever enough for them. Where the Israelis were concerned, his attitude developed into hostility which was often fantastical, not to say paranoid. In his surprise and dismay over unfolding events is heard the melancholy but authentic sound of the breaking of the British empire.

Privately, Shuckburgh and his beautiful wife had high social connections, and they shared tastes in the arts, and in music in partic-

DAVID PRYCE-JONES *is a British novelist and political analyst. His most recent novel is* The Afternoon Sun *(Weidenfeld and Nicolson).*

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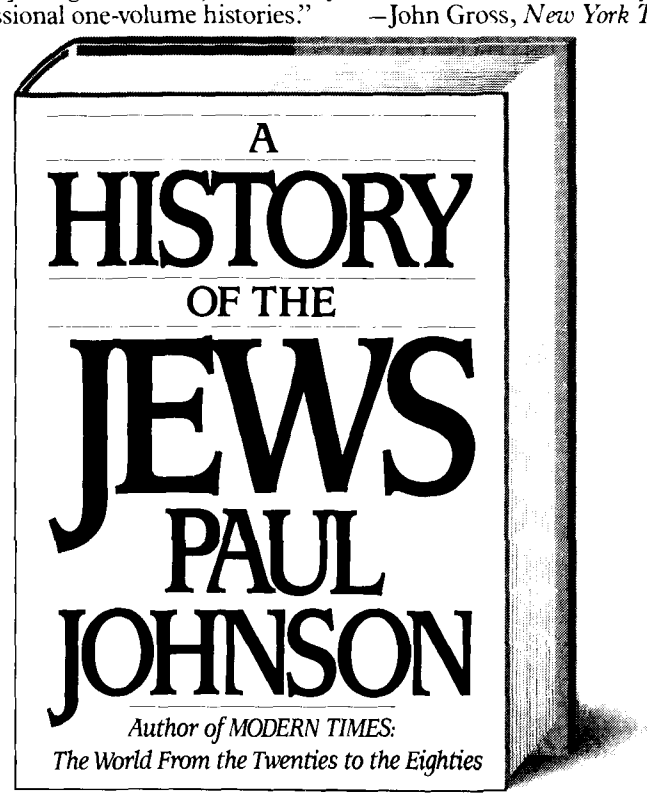

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ular. Here was someone cultivated in the best sense. Also he was following a family tradition, in that his father, Sir John Shuckburgh, had been Under Secretary in the Colonial Office, with special responsibility for Palestine between the wars. In an early posting to the Cairo embassy, in 1937, the son was already writing to ask his father, "How can we risk prejudicing our whole position in the Arab world for the sake of Palestine?" Then and since, the Foreign Office has been unable to see beyond that simplified, one-side-or-the-other formula. In fairness, it should be said that the indecisiveness of Shuckburgh *père* and his generation over Palestine and the Arabs had fully prepared the miseries of Shuckburgh *fils* and his generation.

THE diaries begin in 1951, when Evelyn Shuckburgh was promoted to private secretary to Anthony Eden, then Foreign Secretary in Winston Churchill's last government. Initially impressed by Eden, Shuckburgh in the end perceived him as vain and egocentric, a poseur who liked to conduct business in his bedroom and addressed him and others as "dear." As the anxious heir-presumptive to the aging Churchill, Eden lacked the courage to be his own man, lest he somehow forfeit his claim.

Presumably it was a matter of temperament that both Eden and Shuckburgh were so much occupied with daily trivialities. In these diaries, long-term policy assessments are nowhere suggested, and nothing indicates that either Eden or Shuckburgh was making such assessments. Both men were busily, and sometimes hysterically, responding around the clock to rumors, to gossip about colleagues, to articles in the press, or to the absence of articles in the press.

Unkind words pierced Shuckburgh. His first two big occasions were at the United Nations debate on Korea in 1952, and at the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina. At the former, Andrei Vishinsky, formerly the chief prosecutor at the Moscow Trials and now the Soviet representative at the United Nations, gave an anti-Western speech that was "very disagreeable." At the latter, the Chinese came "preaching hatred of the white man and confident in the massive forward march of their nation and reckoning to throw us out of Asia altogether." Shuckburgh recorded: "I am upset—what is it? —frightened." It was axiomatic to him that "it would be folly to try to save Indochina by force of arms." He did not consider what effect it would have upon the Russians, Chinese, and the Vietminh to observe someone so palpably upset by speeches alone.

American robustness in the face of these opponents was so alarming to Shuckburgh that it seemed almost indistinguishable from Communist aggression. Hearing Dean Acheson say that the Western nations would have to "fight their way out," Shuckburgh took no heart at all: "The fact is that, when you scratch this elegant and civilized Acheson, he turns out to be just another tough guy." Chinese rage itself seemed to him primarily the fault of the Americans, "for being so damned contemptuous of them." Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, openly displaying "almost pathological rage and gloom" at what he had to hear from allies and enemies alike, becomes a favorite bugbear in these pages. Encounters between Dulles and Eden were embarrassing, as Eden withheld even moral support because of his conviction that the Americans wanted only to replace the French in Indochina and the British in Egypt.

"One gets a terrible impression of the United States and Russia as two unwieldy, insensitive prehistoric monsters floundering about in the mud," wrote Shuckburgh. Which is the more strikingly false in this phrase—the political perspective which reduces the United States and Russia to one and the same mudpile, or the assumption of superior British sensitivity?

TAKING over responsibility for the Middle East, Shuckburgh had to contend with the fallout of the Mossadegh crisis in Iran, the Baghdad Pact and its repercussions, a dispute with Saudi Arabia (which had invaded the desert oasis of Buraimi), and above all Egypt's President Nasser. At that moment, Nasser was consolidating his power by eliminating those who had helped him to achieve it, as was only to be expected. Eighty-thousand British troops were stationed in the Canal Zone, and if Nasser could succeed in removing them on his terms, he could hope to justify himself to the Egyptians as their leader. To that end, he directed the usual terrorist campaign.

Typically, Shuckburgh nowhere discusses whether withdrawing or maintaining the garrison would serve British or Egyptian interests, or both, or neither, all of which is as debatable today as it was then. Churchill and Field Marshal Montgomery are among those recorded here as advocating the use of bayonets in the circumstances. Churchill hoped for a fight, after which the British would withdraw, leaving Nasser to learn his lessons the hard way. Reflexively, Shuckburgh mocked and rejected this line. It was a foregone conclusion to him that Nasser could not be resisted. Principle was not involved. No pacifist, he merely considered that force was too public, too ungainly.

Shuckburgh's conception of the nature of Middle East politics was too shallow to have any practical application. His inability to grasp that the Arab sociopolitical system owed nothing to British sensitivities, let alone to democratic values, condemned him in advance to defeat and loss. The limitation in his thinking often led to unfounded suppositions—for instance, that Syria might meaningfully merge with Iraq, or that the Sudanese, split religiously and tribally, and at that point uncertain of independence from either Britain or Egypt, "have it in them to become a really independent and stable nation." Egypt was a society without defenses against a man of Nasser's ambitions, yet Shuckburgh imagined offering him a "carrot" to desist from the pursuit of power, and fondly hoped that "sense" might be put into him. In the event, Nasser and his Free Officers could hardly believe their luck at the terms proposed by the Foreign Office for the evacuation of the Canal Zone. The Egyptians

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signed on the spot, and not even their grins of delight alerted Shuckburgh to what lay ahead.

How, the British wondered, was it conceivable that Nasser, who had been ceded what he wanted, was still not friendly to Britain? Would more concessions do the trick? Perhaps something should be done about the Arab-Israeli dispute, one of the "unnecessary irritants" that in Shuckburgh's judgment needed to be eliminated in order to improve relations with the Arab states. It was to this, at any rate, that he turned his attention. Together with Francis Russell, his opposite number in the State Department, he worked out "Plan Alpha," a fine example of diplomats' geometry that involved complex territorial concessions by Israel, with land going to Jordan and Egypt, and British guarantees to follow.

The discovery that the Israelis would not allow their boundaries to be thus whimsically reduced embittered Shuckburgh. His thoughts turned to using force against *them*, for their own good. He persuaded himself that the Israelis did not appreciate their own true interest, and that if they did not obey, then they could only expect to be killed one day: "They seem to have some sort of ghetto instinct." It was a short step from there to losing his temper with Israeli representatives, telling Prime Minister Eden that the *Guardian* was a Jewish newspaper, making reckless accusations about agents and lobbies. By November 1955, he "half hoped that the secret reports [of impending war] were true, and that the Israelis would attack Egypt, and have a good fight before going under for good and all."

Plan Alpha had no basis in reality. It coincided with the launching by Nasser of guerrillas from the Gaza Strip, and Israeli retaliation. By contrast, Nasser's interest in raising the stakes was very real, for by this means he was able to oppose the Baghdad Pact and secure Soviet arms, thereby opening up the maneuverings between East and West which finally made him the uncontested Egyptian leader. To Shuckburgh, as apparently to the whole Foreign Office, these developments were quite beyond prediction. In bewilderment, Shuckburgh came slowly to perceive that British policy had created the very Soviet opportunity in the area which it had been designed to preclude. He bemoaned the ingratitude of the Arabs, rather than blaming his own timidities and misconceptions. "How they hate us really," he wrote in his usual vein, when the true lament should have been, how deftly the power-seeking Nasser has taken advantage of us.

Like Shuckburgh, Eden himself was soon swinging between alternative reactions of abject surrender and violence, whose climax was reached in the disastrous Suez campaign of 1956. "Poor England! We are in total disarray," Shuckburgh was exclaiming at the end of his term in office, and these sentiments

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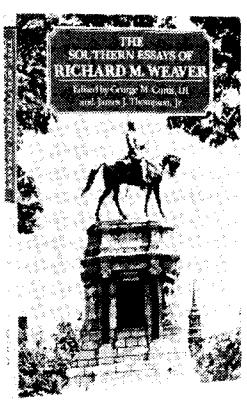

THE SOUTHERN ESSAYS OF RICHARD M. WEAVER

Foreword by George Core
Edited with Preface by George M. Curtis, III and James J. Thompson, Jr.

Richard M. Weaver (1910-1963) was one of the leading figures in the post World War II development of an intellectual, self-conscious conservatism. Yet following his untimely death his work, for the most part, faded from view, though his most important and widely cited book, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago, 1948), still is in print.

Weaver's appreciation of liberty was rooted in his understanding of Southern history. He discovered, ". . . in his native land the evolution of a 'social bond individualism' that had emanated from the environs of Concord and Walden Pond." This collection of fourteen of Weaver's essays on the South and Southern history is presented in demonstration of George Core's point that "few critics of the South rival Richard Weaver in comprehensiveness of vision and depth of thought. . . ."

Among the essays included are "Lee the Philosopher" (1948), "Agrarianism in Exile" (1950), "The Tennessee Agrarians" (1952), and "Two Types of Individualism" (1963).

George M. Curtis, III is Professor of History at Hanover College and James J. Thompson, Jr., is Book Review Editor of *The New Oxford Review*.

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earned him a transfer as Chief Civilian Instructor at the Imperial Defense College, of all posts and places.

The profound defeatism so vividly exposed in these diaries no doubt was the guiding disposition of many influential Foreign Office officials at that moment, when the fate of many former colonial peoples was in the balance. Unable to recognize their own interests, officials of this cast of mind could not recognize anyone else's either. Refusing to pay the price for order, they handed the costs of disorder to others, in this case the Arab masses left at the mercy of any dictator now able to capture the state.

Teacher & Poet

THE SELECTED LETTERS OF MARK VAN DOREN. Edited by GEORGE HENDRICK. *Louisiana State University Press. 280 pp. $30.00.*

Reviewed by JEFFREY HART

IT IS startling how little remains of Mark Van Doren, how little he is present to us today, fifteen years after his death. The editor of *The Essays of Mark Van Doren (1924-1972)*, published by an academic press in 1980, feels able to claim only that "a growing coterie of readers" believes that his work is important and will last. *The Noble Voice* (1946), about the epic tradition and perhaps the best among Van Doren's many books of criticism, no longer seems to be a presence, perhaps because the Western tradition itself and the epic along with it have lost their former authority—though, in the academy today, the Western tradition has lost its authority rather as Caesar lost his on the steps of the Capitol with Brutus looking on. The same might be said of Van Doren's brilliant *Liberal Education* (1943), an argument for reading the Western classics which was influential in its time. (Today Allan Bloom, making much of the same argument in *The Closing of the American Mind*, writes as a voice crying in the wilderness, pessimistic as politicized fads replace genuine learning in the university curriculum.) Nor is Van Doren's large body of poetry—he won a Pulitzer Prize in 1940 for his *Collected Poems*—much read any longer.

Yet from 1920 until his retirement in 1957, Mark Van Doren was a major and shaping force in the Columbia English Department, joined and complemented in such eminence by Lionel Trilling after the publication of *The Liberal Imagination* in 1950. Beyond that, Van Doren was a public figure, for a time literary editor of the *Nation*, known to a wide audience through the prestigious radio talk show *Invitation to Learning*, the friend and professional colleague of a broad range of writers.

One of five sons of a physician, Van Doren grew up in Urbana, Illinois and attended the university there. His master's thesis, a study of Thoreau, was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1916. After a stint in the army he followed his older brother Carl, the historian, to Columbia. His doctoral dissertation on John Dryden was published in 1920 and reviewed by no less than T.S. Eliot in the *Times Literary Supplement*: "The consideration is so thorough," wrote Eliot, "the matter so compact, the appreciation is so just, temperate and enthusiastic and . . . the suggestion of acutely placed facts leads our thought so far—that it is a book which every practitioner of verse should study." Not bad for a Ph.D. thesis; and though the book appeared sixty-seven years ago it has by no means been eclipsed by all that has been written about Dryden since.

BEGINNING in 1920, Van Doren went on to have a superbly effective academic career, and the students who owed much to him included many who themselves went on to their own high achevement: Lionel Trilling, Meyer Schapiro, Jacques Barzun, Clifton Fadiman, Thomas Merton, John Berryman, Louis Zukofsky, Donald Keene, Stephen Orgel, Daniel Hoffman, Allen Ginsberg, Louis Simpson, John Hollander, Richard Howard. Perhaps only Harvard could rival Columbia in the literary distinction of its graduates during the period in which Van Doren taught.

Van Doren was more effective in the classroom than any other professor I have encountered. Strikingly handsome, his face proclaimed his Midwestern American identity. His manners were spiritually democratic, and, on his feet before a class, he possessed the capacity to elicit intelligence in a student where it heretofore had been unsuspected. His principal course during much of his career was called "The Narrative Art," and over a two-semester period it dealt with a small number of supremely great works: *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, the Bible (selections), *The Divine Comedy*, *Don Quixote*, and *The Castle*. His lectures were really conversations, begun with a few observations, in the course of which he would draw a student into dialogue, the student led to say things he had never thought of before about Achilles, Moses, or Dulcinea.

"From the beginning, I think," he wrote in his *Autobiography* (1958),

> I assumed experience even in freshmen. . . . Perhaps the chief novelty consisted in my assumption that nothing was too difficult for the students. . . . Freshmen have had more experience than they are given credit for. They have been born, had parents, had brothers and sisters and friends, been in love, been jealous, been angry, been ambitious, been tired, been hungry, been happy and unhappy, been aware of justice and injustice. Well, the great writers handled just such things; and they did so in the basic human language men must use whenever they feel and think. The result, if no teacher prevented its happening, was that the freshmen learned about themselves. And so did the teachers, at least if they read and talked like men of the world, simply and humbly, without assumptions of academic superiority.

Though Van Doren was indeed a superb teacher, his attitude to-

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ward teaching was, on the evidence of his letters, ambivalent. As each autumn approached, he took a dismal view of returning to Columbia from his Connecticut farm. He always looked forward eagerly to leaves and vacations. One has the feeling that his "real" life was the one lived away from Manhattan amid his books, his thoughts, and his writing. Van Doren, citing Allen Tate's opinion in a letter to John Berryman, said that "universities care no more about literary distinction than whores do about chastity."

PURSUING his correspondence was a major literary activity for Van Doren. He devoted many hours a week to it, and the selection here, though representative, amounts to only a fraction of the letters he wrote to his brother Carl, Allen Tate, John Berryman, Allen Ginsberg, Mortimer Adler, Scott Buchanan, Robert Frost, Thomas Merton, Lionel Trilling, Archibald MacLeish, Joseph Wood Krutch, and to other colleagues, students, friends, and publishers. He does not consciously strive for distinction in the epistolary mode—who, since Byron, has done so?—but his letters are vivid, concrete, and continuously interesting. They provide a window on the literary and academic life of the period, as Van Doren, a working writer, addresses literary and professional matters with other working writers.

Much has been said lately about and by the writers associated with *Partisan Review*, but Van Doren—along with Tate, Lowell, Berryman, and others—was closely associated with the *Southern Review*, which, in retrospect, seems more impressive than *Partisan Review* in a purely literary sense, that is, in the new poetry and fiction it published. The series of letters from Van Doren to Tate included here are especially rich.

Van Doren thought of himself primarily as a poet. As such, he stood apart from the modernist tradition, his poetic ancestors being Herrick, Dryden, Robinson, and Frost, and, behind them all, Catullus. It is interesting that Frost, conducting his protracted conflict with Eliot and modernism, virtually insisted that his own publisher, Henry Holt, become the publisher as well of Van Doren's poetry.

In a review, Tate said a number of important things about Van Doren's poems. He considered Van Doren "a formalist who is trying in every poem to write a masterpiece; he is day by day the whole man who submits the whole range of his awareness to the forms he has elected to use." Tate thought that Van Doren's formalism tended to prevent him from being closely

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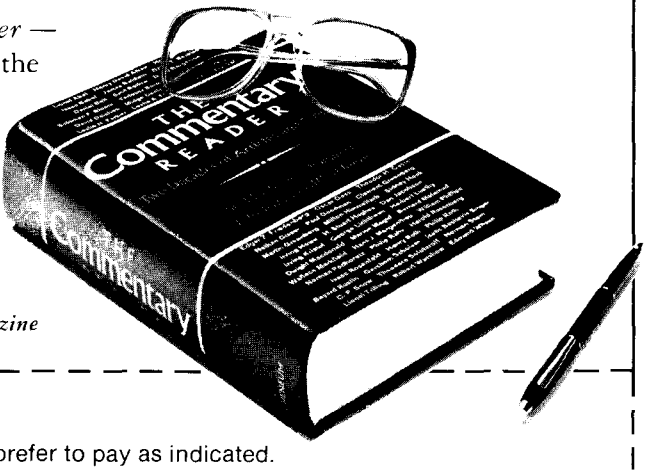

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read in the heyday of modernism, and concluded that he was "a great poet in minor modes."

ONE theme that runs through these letters is Van Doren's desire to write a "long poem." He did write a fine one in "Winter Diary," but what he really wanted to do was an epic narrative. He taught his course in the epic tradition for many years, and pondered intensely the constituents of the greatest narratives. He was unable to create one himself, which is hardly surprising, but the idea haunted him:

My great friends do not know
me.
Hamlet in the halls,
Achilles by the river, and Don
Quixote
Feasting with the Duke see no
one there
Like me, like Mark Van Doren,
who grows daily
Older while they look not,
change not
Die not save deaths their
masters made.

A month before he died in 1972, in the midst of preparing a volume of poems for what would have been his eightieth birthday, Van Doren expressed puzzlement that his poetry seemed neglected.

He might have reflected that this could be viewed as an aspect of a general condition. There exists today no substantial readership for poetry, even in the academy, and there is certainly no excitement when a fresh volume appears. Few await poetry or even fiction with the anticipation that once attended *Ulysses*, *The Waste Land*, or *A Farewell to Arms*. Something peculiar seems to have happened to literature, and, certainly therefore, to literary criticism, when the high modernists—Yeats, Eliot, Joyce, Mann, Pound, *et al.*—became culturally absorbed and lost their power to shock and fascinate. My own literary undergraduates know much of the work of the high modernists, but not the work of the writers who emerged in their wake, from the 1940's through the present—Robert Lowell, John Berryman, Delmore Schwartz, Saul Bellow, etc. These later writers do not command the sheer authority once possessed by the high modernists, and one result has been the destruction of literary criticism. The high modernists brought into being the techniques of close reading that were called for by their difficult and challenging texts. But when the high modernist impulse waned, criticism turned to popular culture, "camp," and then to the Sorbonne, Yale, and "theory." Who, after all, wants to write serious textual criticism of Philip Roth or Ann Beattie?

VAN DOREN's political views remain something of an enigma, not so much in their content—they were leftish; their precise borders remain indistinct—but in their rationale. He was of course profoundly a man of the Western tradition, from Homer through the present, as T.S. Eliot put it. Yet he despised President Truman, and in his recent autobiography, *Out of Step*, Sidney Hook recalls debating Van Doren "who, under the influence of Scott Buchanan, was a naive and uncritical supporter of Henry Wallace." In 1958 Van Doren declared in his own autobiography that he believed Alger Hiss to be innocent, but in no way offered to deal with the evidence to the contrary. One can only speculate, but it seems to me possible that Van Doren, long associated with the *Nation*, and with the leftish ambience of Scott Buchanan (then president of St. John's college in Annapolis), fell in with the sentimental "Americanism" of the Popular Front of the later 30's, when the distinction between democracy and Stalinism was widely obfuscated. If so, his fine intellect for once failed him, though, if this speculation is correct, he was far from alone in these confusions.

His final posthumous volume of poetry seems to me remarkable.

Eternity is now or not at all.
Waited for a wisp; remembered,
shadows.
Eternity is solid as the sun:
As present; as familiar; as
immense.

It was very much like him that, as he approached eighty, he entitled this final volume *Good Morning*.

A Turn Toward Utopia

JANUS AND MINERVA. ESSAYS IN THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS. By STANLEY HOFFMANN. *Westview. 458 pp. $39.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID GRESS

INSIDE this rather fat book by Stanley Hoffmann, a professor of international relations at Harvard and a well-known liberal proponent of realism in foreign policy, there are two thinner books struggling to get out. One, consisting primarily of essays grouped under the headings "Theories and Theorists" and "Order and Violence," is a series of generally judicious and informative surveys and meditations on political philosophy and its applicability to international relations. The other, arranged under the headings "Actors and Interactions" and "Sermons and Suggestions," is chiefly on arms control and national security. This second "book" contains, in the guise of objective analysis, and interspersed with common sense, a number of dubious or even dangerous assumptions. Their common denominators are that arms control is a road to peace and that the U.S. should focus less on the conflict with the Soviet Union and more on encouraging change in the Third World.

Between Hoffmann's method and his philosophical views, on the one hand, and his policy analysis and prescriptions, on the other hand, falls the shadow. The latter just do not seem to follow from the former. For example, in "Taming the Eagle," he calls on us to "give up our obsession with 'stability,' which so often makes us try to prop up a collapsing or criminal status quo"; to "give up our conviction that we know what is good for others . . . yet without hesitating to use our influence to prevent violations of human rights by governments that depend on

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us"; to "give up the dream of climbing out of the nuclear age by means of a technological miracle"; and, finally, to accept that " 'existential deterrence' remains the best protection against nuclear attack." (Existential deterrence, for the uninitiated, is the view, propagated most recently by Robert McNamara and McGeorge Bundy, that strategic nuclear weapons are so devastating as to be militarily useless and therefore that a small number of them are enough to create, in the mind of an aggressor, a fear that we might, if attacked, use them.)

Now none of these recommendations, not to speak of the ideas and the world view underlying them, has anything to do with the traditional doctrine of realism in the study of international relations, in which Hoffmann was educated. They have a whole lot to do with utopianism, and with what I have elsewhere called the "innocent arrogance" of liberal Americans who think the rest of the world really does dance to America's tune. Thus, although Hoffmann excoriates the alleged belief of the Reagan administration in "the United States' sacred mission either as a world policeman or as a world benefactor," here he is himself advocating that the U.S. should intervene against human-rights violations by "governments that depend on us," quite as if the United States had the power or the ability to compel this sort of change either in hostile or in friendly governments. And as for that utopian commitment known as existential deterrence, Hoffmann writes about it as though it were a fact about the way the world works and not a figment of the imagination of certain former U.S. officials plagued by feelings of guilt; in the real world, to adopt such a posture would be to hand the power of nuclear blackmail to the Soviet Union.

The fact is that the Soviets, whose behavior, Hoffmann notwithstanding, will remain decisive for the fate of our own liberties and those of our remaining friends in the world, do not believe that their conflict with us is anything but central; do not believe that perpetual coexistence with us is either desirable or possible; do believe that military might "works" in gaining geopolitical power; and, finally and most emphatically, do believe in the "dream" of antimissile defense.

HOFFMANN follows his list of utopian prescriptions with a chapter entitled "Beyond Terror," in which he sings the praises of arms control as though it were a process that had actually worked. "It is necessary," he writes, "to try to constrain further dangerous technological developments. It can be done: witness the ABM treaty." That treaty, however, hardly proves that one can "constrain" technology—not, at least, the technology being developed in a totalitarian state like the Soviet Union. What it has proved, rather, is that the Soviet Union can fool the U.S. into thinking that strategic defense is a bad idea.

Hoffmann's misreading of the significance of the ABM treaty is symptomatic of his faith in arms control in general: for him, it is not a political tool of very marginal value, but a positive instrument for stability and peace. Its ultimate purpose, he writes, is "common security," that is, a political condition in which both superpowers realize that their safety depends on the stability of their mutual relationship, and neither tries to win unilateral advantages over the other.

The phrase "common security" should sound alarm bells in the mind of any genuine realist. As an approach to international relations, realism was born not only out of the experience of World War II but out of the ignominious collapse of precisely that notion of "common security" which had been developed by international lawyers and diplomats in the aftermath of World War I and enshrined in the League of Nations. In the view of Hans Morgenthau and Raymond Aron, Hoffmann's principal mentors in political realism, common security, like human rights, could only obtain in and between regimes that shared certain civilized values. In other words, common security worked where there was really no need for security, and was thus a highly unusual condition in international affairs. The more general condition of world politics, according to the realists, was a state of war which no overarching authority was capable of changing. As far as the two superpowers were concerned, the only difference made by nuclear weapons was that the state of war could no longer take the form of combat between

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military forces but became rather a diplomatic, economic, and cultural struggle for the control of geopolitically vital territory, accompanied by occasional proxy wars between smaller states supported by the two sides.

Even as the realists were propounding this view of the world in the late 40's and 50's, many Western politicians were resurrecting the idea of common security in the form of the United Nations. By the mid-1960's, just at the time that the UN was becoming a positive force for *in*stability and anti-Western conflict, Morgenthau himself, and after him other realists, suddenly and paradoxically turned utopian: they discovered in themselves a hitherto unsuspected faith that the UN was really going to lead to that universal pacification proclaimed as the goal of politics by Immanuel Kant in the 18th century.

Hoffmann made this "utopian turn" along with Morgenthau. (Raymond Aron emphatically did not.) One suspects he was moved by something else besides an irrational faith in the UN, and what that something else was becomes clear from a number of remarks he makes here about the perils of "indiscriminate" U.S. interventionism. It was the Vietnam war.

Hoffmann holds to the liberal view of Vietnam, according to which, however deplorable the results of the U.S. defeat and withdrawal, the war was still wrong and should not have been fought. Vietnam was an area of "secondary importance," and we did not and do not have the "ability to control, shape, or even understand political developments in deeply foreign cultures and countries." One might think that the lesson to be drawn from this accurate observation is that the U.S. needs better sources of information and a more consistent policy; Hoffmann, however, like Morgenthau before him, concludes that we have defined our interests too widely and need to be restrained.

APART from Vietnam, what motivated Morgenthau and Hoffmann —but, again, not Aron—to depart from their original realism was the fear of nuclear war, and the belief that technological developments were increasing the danger of it. From this derived their somewhat apocalyptic belief that either the world will achieve, in Hoffmann's words, "the progressive prevalence of restraints over violence, of cooperation over hostility, of a common humanity over the innumerable divisions of the human race," or we will all face a repetition of "the summer of 1914."

The 1914 analogy has lately become exceedingly popular with liberal politicians and intellectuals, from George Kennan to the former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. It implies a world of rival alliances in which a minor event somewhere on the periphery (in the Middle East, say, or in Central America) can set off a chain reaction, triggering interventions, ultimatums, and maneuvers which will end by pulling the nuclear superpowers into war with each other. But as Donald Kagan has definitively shown in his article "World War I, World War II, World War III" in the March COMMENTARY, this widespread use of the 1914 analogy is based on a false interpretation of World War I. That war occurred not by mistake but as a result of rational calculation: the offensive calculation by Germany that a bid for European hegemony might succeed, the defensive calculation of Britain and France that German expansionism would have to be stopped. Clearly if we apply *this* understanding of what happened in 1914 to our present situation, conclusions entirely different from Hoffmann's impose themselves: namely, that war between the U.S. and the USSR will occur, if it does, because the Soviets calculate that a bid for world hegemony might succeed. The governing task of U.S. foreign policy thus becomes akin to that faced (inadequately) by Britain and France before 1914, namely, to prevent a situation from arising in which the Soviet leaders might act on such a calculation.

Hoffmann's use of the false 1914 analogy is yet another illustration of the way his policy prescriptions conflict with his philosophy. In one of his best chapters, on the history of the study of international relations in America, he names Thucydides as one of the three authors that all students of world politics must read (the other two being Kenneth Waltz and Raymond Aron). Yet Thucydides located the cause of the war that crippled Greek civilization in, precisely, a calculation by each side that the power of the other was growing and must be stopped. We need not look, in other words, for accidents or automatic triggers; wars happen for entirely rational and political reasons, easily understandable by any realist then and now.

To Hoffmann, nuclear weapons are so terrible that they must, by their very existence, compel a common search for world order. But nothing in the record, and especially not in the record of the Soviet Union, supports the notion that this is happening or must happen. The fact is that there is no way to avoid the danger of nuclear war altogether: even a policy of outright U.S. surrender to the Soviet Union would not lessen, and might well increase, the risk of nuclear war between the Soviet Union and China, or between other nuclear-armed states.

A correct reading of the past forty years suggests that the single greatest force for peace in the world has not been the fear of nuclear war, or the quest for common security, but the power of the United States. While that power was strong and credible, the risk of war, including nuclear war, was less than it has become since we fell into our post-Vietnam dotage. That is the all-too-real fact.

Because Hoffmann is obviously no radical, this book will give aid and comfort to liberal enemies of SDI and of the Reagan administration's Central America policy. That is unfortunate, because despite the many things of value to be found in his essays on political philosophy and on the proper way to study international relations, the policy prescriptions contained herein are based on a flawed and utopian view of the way the world works and where it is heading.

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